

CANADIAN NORTH-WEST  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PUBLICATIONS

## Chapters in the North-West History Prior to 1890 Related by Old Timers



# The Dominion Telegraph

BATTLEFORD  
SASKATCHEWAN

VOL. I. NO. VI  
1930.

# Canadian North-West Historical Society

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## THE AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

1. To collect and save the life sketches and historical stories of our pioneers, also the documents which throw light on the West's development prior to 1890.
2. The publication of historical works which contain the original stories of the Pioneer. All the stories relating to an historical event will be edited in one publication and will provide an up-to-date source history of the Prairie Provinces. The members will receive the publications of Volume I, of five or six publications on payment of the subscription of \$5.00. A Special offer of Life Subscription of \$25.00 is being offered for a short time.
3. The Historical Archives at Battleford contain books, maps, pamphlets, relics, documents relating to North-West History, for use of the research student.
4. This Society will assist in the publication of historical works for individuals and other Societies, and it has secured the assistance of Western history men to assist in this research.
5. Historic spots are marked and historic interest in these is created. Public meetings are held to further this work.
6. This is the West's urgent problem. Save the Source History and Honor the Pioneer.

# PIONEERS

1880.

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BY J. STUART MACDONALD.

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As we came out from Winnipeg,  
With buckboard and cayuse,  
Tent, grub box, bedding roped on tight  
And spare horse running loose.

The trail across the White Horse Plains  
Was pied with Summer flowers,  
While meadow-larks made melody  
Throughout the golden hours.

And, as the velvet dusk came down,  
We pitched our tent beside  
A little lake where poplars tall  
Spread out their branches wide.

Then, horses tethered, supper made  
Of bannocks, bacon, tea,  
We soon were lost in dreamless sleep  
Till dawn broke through the trees.

So, westward, day by day, we crept  
Across the prairies vast,  
While Summer into Autumn slipped  
And days grew shorter fast.

In curving furrows, seen for miles,  
The trail winds o'er the plain,  
Creeps o'er a slope, then climbs a hill  
To come in sight again.

A vast expanse of fertile land,  
As yet untouched by plow,  
Where far-flung fields of golden grain  
The eye does gladden now.

A thousand miles, without a bridge  
O'er river, marsh or stream,  
A winding trail by wood and hill  
And lakes whose waters gleam.

The sand-hill cranes in weaving flight  
Called harshly from on high;  
Great flocks of wild geese, southward bound,  
Flew wedge-shaped in the sky.

The timid antelopes in herds  
Went bounding o'er the plain,  
The badger in his digging paused,  
Then turned to dig again.

Like snowdrift on the brown hillside  
The wavies paused from flight,  
Ten thousand in a single flock  
Gleamed in the sunshine bright.

Coyotes through the autumn night  
Protested loud and shrill;  
The kit fox crept about our tent  
Or barked from off the hill.

The wild geese splashed into the lake  
To join their comrades there,  
While trumpet swans made loud response  
To kindred in the air.

Red River carts with eerie screech  
Were heard while miles away,  
As loaded deep with fur and hides  
They eastward made their way.

Perchance, as darkness fell, the sky  
Blood-red warned of a fire,  
Then, back-fires set, and all made safe,  
We watched it drawing nigher.

Till, like a wave, the rushing flames  
Went swiftly on their way,  
To show a dreary, blackened waste  
With the return of day.

As we came up to Battleford  
Across the Eagle Hills,  
The waters to the river danced  
By half a hundred rills.

High soared the eagles overhead,  
Scarce seen against the blue,  
While from the rushes by the pool  
The startled mallard flew.

Through sunshine bright, through rain and snow,  
We held the trail until,  
As Autumn closed, Fort Edmonton  
We viewed below the hill.





# The Dominion Telegraph

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Written by J. S. MACDONALD, of Edmonton, Alberta, General Inspector of the Government Telegraph Service. Settlement in this great lone land was made possible by the coming of the C.P.R.; by the North-West Mounted Police and the Telegraph. The author, J. S. Macdonald, has been connected with the Telegraph for almost 50 years. He has held the various positions from lineman to General Inspector, and is the only person in active service who was an employee under the original contract.

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(Copyright applied for.)

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Canadian North-West Historical Society,  
Battleford, Saskatchewan.

VOL. 1, No. VI.  
1930.





DR. J. T. M. ANDERSON, M.A., LL.B., D. Paed.,  
*Premier of Saskatchewan.*

## P r e f a c e

In preserving the authentic history of our country there are two bounden duties imposed upon us—one to honour the memories of those who by their undaunted courage, their high and indomitable spirit, their steadfast loyalty to the traditions of their race, and the sufferings and privations which they endured made possible the road for those who were to follow after; and the other to perpetuate by the written word their struggles and achievements for the profit and emulation of posterity.

It has become a platitude to speak of the debt we owe to the pioneers, but surely in no country and at no period has this been more strongly exemplified than in our own Saskatchewan. We do not yet realize it; the perspective is still too near. Our development has been so rapid, so stupendous that the imagination fails to grasp it.

A little over fifty years ago—not even the span of a man's life—there was neither home nor habitation of a white man between Fort Qu'Appelle and the Rocky Mountains; and yet we in our own day and hour have seen hundreds of millions of bushels of grain garnered from the same region. What a sublime faith and courage must have been the attributes of those who ventured forth to set up the sign posts on the western trails in the days before the coming of the railways, and how well that faith has been justified.

Within the memory of people still living, the traveller who adventured west of the Red River was immediately swallowed up in the solitudes. The distances were vast, and the plains with the exception of a few outposts of the Great Fur Company were inhabited only by wild and warring Indian tribes, and the wild animals native to the wilderness. There were always the daunting qualities of the unknown to face, and the wayfarer was menaced by the asperities of an austere and unknown climate. There are those who still survive who recollect a time when it was not safe to ride west of the Moose Jaw Creek for fear of a Blackfoot war party, and the prairie schooner often had to rely for his life on the speed of his horse or the accuracy of his rifle.

## PREFACE

It is unfortunate that to many of our people, the history of the country prior to the coming of the railway has remained a closed book; yet at that period the Western Plains has a vivid and barbaric life all its own. Isaac Cowie, who served as an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Qu'Appelle during the middle years of last century, relates that during the sixties as many as four thousand carts were travelling westward from the Red River to take part in the summer buffalo hunt:

The hunting camps that were ~~reach~~ each year, established throughout the western plains were great centres of activity. The hunters, Metis for the most part from the Red River, travelled in large parties to protect themselves from Blackfoot or Sioux war parties, and they carried in their train many women and girls, who occupied themselves not only with the domestic affairs of the camp but cut up and dressed the meat of the buffaloes killed by the hunters, and dressed the skins. These camps were institutions, and the characteristic life which prevailed in them has been described by various writers, and their passing marked an epoch in the life of the West. There is a wealth of western material, not only for the historian but for the romantic writer as well:

Early in the nineteenth century the great explorer Sir John Franklin—then plain Captain Franklin, of the Royal Navy—accompanied by Dr. John Richardson and a considerable party, wintered in the Saskatchewan country, and their journals, still extant, contain valuable information of the conditions which then existed. At that time Franklin was preparing for a dash to the Arctic Sea by way of the Coppermine River, and the exploits of his party, and the sufferings which they endured on that expedition form an epic that will be told as long as the British race endures. It is also interesting to note that years afterwards when in a subsequent expedition to search for the North West Passage, Franklin, with his two ships had disappeared in the icy silence of the Arctic night, and after millions of dollars had been spent in efforts to learn his fate, it was the slimly-equipped party of prairie wayfarers under the leadership of Dr. Rae, of the Red River, which, after crossing the Saskatchewan Plains, forced the icy ramparts of the North and obtained the evidences of the tragedy which had overtaken the intrepid explorer and his men.

Captain Palliser, for the British Government, was perhaps the first official explorer to cross the Southern plains, and although we may not always agree with his conclusions, he obtained a good deal of valuable information which was incorporated in a parliamentary blue book. After him came a succession of distinguished travellers, chief amongst whom was

## PREFACE

Sir William Butler, then Captain Butler, of the Intelligence Staff of General Wolseley, whose experiences and observation have been given to us in his books which make valuable contributions to the history of the country. Lord Chaplin, who for more than half a century was regarded as the beau ideal of the English squire and country gentleman, came west for a buffalo hunt in the late sixties and had his name perpetuated by having it bestowed on a large lake west of Moose Jaw.

High tribute must be paid to the intrepid missionaries who carried the message of their faith to the Indian tribes of the remotest solitudes and who contributed not only to the spiritual but the material welfare of those who came under their influence. The tale of their labours approaches the sublime, and is well worth a history of its own.

Two of the most important milestones in the history of the West were the coming of the Mounted Police, and the building of the Government Telegraph line. The story of the Police has often been well told, as indeed it deserves to be, for it has all the qualities of high romance, but the tale of the telegraph is not so well known, although its establishment was attended by tremendous difficulties, and its administration was carried on under the most arduous conditions. When the members of the North West Mounted Police, in 1874, made their first march to the westward and established their posts in the wilderness, it was decided by the Government to endeavour to establish touch with them by means of telegraph communication, and so the Government Telegraph system in the West came into being. Those connected with its construction and maintenance were pioneers in the truest sense. Their situation was remote and their labour arduous. By reason of their occupation, they had a unique knowledge of every important happening throughout a widely-spaced country. In this connection the article of Mr. J. Stuart Macdonald which appears in your publication is of great value. Mr. Macdonald has had an honourable career of more than half a century almost entirely connected with the Government in the Canadian North West, and during that period has witnessed every phase of development. His knowledge is full and authentic, and the publishers are to be congratulated on securing his article.

The North West Historical Society is doing a splendid and patriotic work in preserving the record of the pioneers, for the example and instruction of those who follow after. The field they are tilling is a fertile one and there is much work to be done. Pioneers are rapidly passing away, and in some cases the

## PREFACE

tales they could have told have gone down to the grave with them. Only a few years ago Madame Julie Desjarlais died at Lebret at more than ninety years of age. She was the daughter of the famous Metis leader who was in command of the party of North Westers which defeated the forces of the Hudson's Bay Company at Seven Oaks and killed Governor Semple. From this conflict came the amalgamation of the two great Fur Companies and peace on the plains. John Louis Legare, a great historical figure, is not long removed from us; and Wm. McKay, one of the greatest of the Saskatchewan pioneers, is still hale and hearty. But the list is long; the work is there to be done. It has an inspiration all its own, and is a work of duty and high obligation.

A large, flowing, handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to read "J. M. Anderson". The "J" and "M" are particularly large and stylized, with the "J" having a long, sweeping loop. The "A" in "Anderson" is also prominent, with a large, circular loop on its left side.

*Premier of Saskatchewan.*

## In Memoriam

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### REGINALD BEATTY

*Melfort*—Died September 11, 1928, at the age of 74.  
In 1872 joined the Hudson's Bay Company, serving it at  
Fairport Post, Swan River, Le Pas and Grand Rapids.  
Settled in the Melfort District in 1883.  
Western farm delegate to England, 1906.  
A good settler, a splendid citizen and a kind friend.

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### MRS. PATRICK BURKE

*Battleford*—Died January 22, 1929, at the age of 80 years.  
Pioneer of St. Boniface, Shoal Lake, Pelly and Battleford.  
Experienced the horrors of the Rebellion of 1870 and 1885.  
Her husband, Bugler Burke, who was in the Wolseley  
Expedition, was killed at Cut Knife Hill fight.  
A faithful pioneer who made many sacrifices.

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### MATHEW HENDERSON MEREDITH

*Battleford*—Died December 6, 1928, at the age of 64.  
Member of the North-West Mounted Police at Fort Walsh,  
Regina and Battleford until 1886.  
Hudson's Bay Company clerk for 17 years. Civil servant  
in the Land Titles at Battleford.  
A kindly, industrious citizen, deeply interested in all phases  
of local development.

T. H. STEDMAN

*Macleod, Alberta*—Died April 21, 1929, at the age of 76.

Born in Hampshire, England.

Joined the Mounted Police in 1875.

Served for three years cattle punching and horse trader in Montana.

Served in the Rebellion of 1885.

Proprietor of the Queen's Hotel at Macleod for 20 years.

A councillor, mayor and police magistrate.

Admirer of good horses; lover of clean sport.

A keen student of the early history of Montana and Southern Alberta.

Fellow member of the Society, 1928.

REV. GEORGE A. SUTHERLAND, M.A.

*Battleford*—Died February 1, 1930.

Born at Earltown, Nova Scotia.

Educated at Dalhousie University and Pine Hill College.

Pastor at Phoenix, B.C. Missionary in British Guiana, Sunny Brae, N.S.; Kensington, P.E.I.; Wilkie, Sask.

Principal of the Battleford School Home, 1921-29.

Director of this Society.

A cheerful, enthusiastic and willing worker in all good works.

JUDGE ALPHONSE GRAVEL, B.A., LL.B.

*Gravelbourg, Sask.*—Died February 20, 1930.

Born at Arthabaska, Quebec.

Educated at Sacred Heart College, Arthabaska; at Nicolet College, Quebec; at Fordham University, New York; at Laval University.

Admitted to the Bar 1899.

Came to Saskatchewan 1908. Practised law at Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg.

Appointed District Court Judge 1922.

A respected citizen, deeply interested in the promotion of good causes.

Fellow member 1928.

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J. STUART MACDONALD

# The Dominion Telegraph

Of the factors instrumental in changing that portion of the North West Territories which now comprises the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta from a vast wilderness to the greatest wheat exporting district on the globe, undoubtedly the Canadian Pacific Railway ranks first. But the country had to be prepared for the railroad and for settlement. Here the North-West Mounted Police takes first place. Second only in importance was the building of a telegraph line by the Dominion Government from Winnipeg to Edmonton, a distance of almost 1,000 miles by the route taken, and the establishment of telegraph offices at strategical points along the way. Today the original line has disappeared from the prairies, while the furrows of the old cart trails which ran alongside of it for hundreds of miles have been obliterated by the plow of the settler. Its glory and usefulness have passed away, but while it is yet a matter of recent memory, it may be well to make some record of its early history, together with mention of the men who had to do with its construction and maintenance. The writer has been associated with the service for almost 50 years, has filled all the various positions from lineman to superintendent, and has been for many years the only person in active service who was an employee under the original contract.

In July, 1874, the Government despatched a force of 500 mounted men westward from Dufferin, Manitoba, where they had been assembled, with the object of policing the North-West Territories—at that time a wide area in which strife between rum-selling "Whites" and horse-stealing Indians was a grave menace. In order to keep in touch with this force a telegraph line was a necessity. Apart from that it had been long felt desirable to link up the British Settlements on the Pacific Coast with those in the East by telegraph and road. Back in the days of the Hudson's Bay Company, in fact in 1863, a contract had been let and material accumulated. The form which this project took at Confederation was a Canadian Pacific Railway uniting the provinces of the New Dominion. Naturally, the first step was to build the telegraph, and for that purpose the Canadian Government acquired the material lying at Fort Garry. A general reconnaissance had determined the route of the railway. It was to run from Selkirk and between Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba, and to pass westward near the present Pelly, and cross the South Saskatchewan at Clark's Crossing, about where the Canadian National now crosses it east of Warman, and

north of Saskatoon. It was then to skirt the elbow of the North Saskatchewan and run from Battleford westward to the neighbourhood of Edmonton and to the Yellowhead Pass.

It was deemed that a telegraph line following this route would best serve the interests of settlement and the Government. In 1871 the Government had linked up Fort Garry with the American Telegraph System to give immediate connection with the West while the line from Fort William to Selkirk and Winnipeg was being built. In 1874 contracts were entered into to build various sections of a line from the Great Lakes to connect with the Telegraph System of British Columbia. The contracts included the clearance of a line 132 feet wide for the railway, and the formation of a trail or road for mules or horses the same to be made as soon as the location of the line was fixed. Accordingly, in 1874 a contract was entered into with Sifton, Glass & Fleming, of Winnipeg, to construct a telegraph line from Selkirk via the Narrows of Lake Manitoba—the route of the proposed railway—to Livingston, where the headquarters of the North West Mounted Police were to be placed, as it was thought, and where the first Government of the Territories were to be temporarily established. Livingston, or Swan River as it was generally known, was 36 miles north of the present town of Kamsack, twelve miles beyond Fort Pelly, the Hudson's Bay Company's post, and six miles beyond the present town of Pelly on the Canadian National Railway. The telegraph office was called Pelly, after the Hudson's Bay Company's post. Livingston did not long play the part of capital, but was abandoned a few months later in favor of Battleford, which was more central, while the headquarters of the Police were kept at Fort Macleod and later at Fort Walsh, in the areas of greatest unrest, until they were finally fixed at Regina when the capital was removed to that place from Battleford. Meanwhile Battleford was the capital and was the station of the North West Mounted Police for the north. It had the advantage of being situated upon the Saskatchewan River, on which, in those years, steamers plied during the summer months. The Sifton contract to build to Livingston was completed, and the line in operation by July 22nd, 1876. The average amount paid by the Government was \$492.00 per mile for woodland areas and \$189.00 for the prairies. \$16.00 per mile per annum was given for maintenance and operation, together with the profits of the line.

The building of the line from Winnipeg to Pelly was a much more difficult task than the construction of the western portion. Dense woods, muskegs and lakes were encountered from the outset, and at times the Indians offered obstruction.

The work was in charge of Mr. George Wright, who became agent at Pelly, upon the completion of the line to that point. Upon one occasion, when about 40 miles from Winnipeg, a band of Indians rode into camp and in the name of the "Great Mother" demanded that the provisions on hand be delivered to them. Mr. Wright remonstrated, pointing out that he would be unable to continue work if he acceded to their request. This argument had no effect upon the Indians who, with threats, persisted in their demand. They had no idea of the purpose of the wire, but they understood that the party was working for the Government, by which they understood Queen Victoria; hence, by their method of reasoning, they were entitled to food. Mr. Wright finally prevailed upon them to wait until next morning, when he promised to discuss the matter with them and arrive at a decision. As soon as the Indians had gone, he telegraphed the state of affairs to Winnipeg. The authorities immediately despatched a number of armed militia, who, by hard riding, reached the camp before the return of the Indians. When the latter arrived to find themselves confronted by armed men in uniform, they made off without waiting for explanations. It transpired later that they believed that by some superhuman agency the soldiers had been transported over the telegraph line during the night and they decided that it was hopeless to oppose such magic.

Swan River, 22nd December, 1875.

Dear Sir:

As I have not my memorandum book of last summer here I am unable to give you any dates of delays or stoppages of Sinclair's train last summer. We had no stoppages, or delays until we arrived at Carlton House, which was in the latter part of July. Here a number of Indians and Chiefs came to our camp led by Mistawasis and Altacoupe, head Chiefs; they enquired where we were going, and asked if we were going to cut any poles. I told them we intended cutting some poles and hay for wintering a number of cattle. The Chiefs brought Peter Balentyne to act as interpreter for them. They spoke for some time repeating their words over and over. They said how the Government had promised them a treaty; that they had received a letter from Governor Archibald, making them all sorts of promises, of which none had ever been fulfilled, and now the Government was sending the telegraphs (or speaking iron as they called it) through their country without saying anything to them, or asking their permission. Now they wanted their rights; they were not going to let the constructing party come any further than the south branch. The Government had made a treaty

with the Indians as far as the south branch, and if Sinclair wanted to cut any hay or poles he might cut them on the east of the above mentioned river; and they strictly forbade us cutting any hay or poles until a treaty was made with them; and they were not going to allow Sinclair to go any farther; but after a short confab amongst themselves, they said we might go on and lay down our wire, plant, etc., but cut nothing. I went and saw Mr. Clarke, Hudson's Bay Company officer, who is a Magistrate, told him what the Indians had said and asked his advice, as a private citizen, what I should do. He told me not to cut any "hay or poles if the Indians had forbidden me. He said he had written several letters to the Government, and told them something ought to be done for the Indians, but they always treated his letters with contempt. He told me that it would be perfectly safe in going on and laying down our wire, etc., as we intended doing, but it would not be safe to cut any hay or poles. After laying at Carlton two days, I got a half-breed to carry a letter back to the constructing party. Sinclair left his mower and horse-rake at Carlton, and we continued on our trip west. According to my instructions, I laid two loads of wire (4) four miles west of Cook's last pile; and had only gone about four miles farther west when we were met by more of the Indians, but these belonged to the bands west of Fort Pitt; they numbered three (3). One of them reported himself as head speaker. He went in front of the head cart and told David Harcrow, of Portage la Prairie, who understood their language fluently, that he forbid this train (Sinclair's carts) going any further, in behalf of himself and his friends, and that he was authorized by his chief ("The Little Man" as he is called in English) to stop any Government proceeding until a treaty was made. He said he had never saw wire like that before, and that if they allowed this to be put up it would frighten all their game away. Now he wanted the Government to send out a man and tell them what their intentions were—whether the Government hated them or liked them, or was it going to make a treaty with them or take their country by force.

I told them that a treaty would be made with them, but I did not know when. I asked him who gave him his information about our coming with this wire. He said he knew nothing of our coming only what he had got from a half-breed the day before, and from him he had learned we would be along the next day; but he said he had been expecting a Commissioner up to speak to them (meaning all of his friends), and when he saw the wire first and heard nothing of the Commissioner, he felt as if something was sticking in his throat. He said that if we insisted on going ahead that they would soon get enough

Indians that would make us stop, and that we had only been delayed by him for two days, but they would keep us for weeks. He said all the Indians were of the same mind. When a treaty was made with them all their rights of the land and country would be the Government's. Now, in my instructions from Mr. Fuller, I was not to have or permit any dispute with Indians, and if I was stopped by them, or from any other cause, I was to take and keep an accurate account of the same, communicating with Messrs. Westfall or Milne, who were in my rear, which I did, as you already know. Under the circumstances I was placed in, I could do nothing but put all the wire, insulators brackets, etc., in one large pile, protected from fire, and turn the train.

(Signed) Geo. W. WRIGHT.

The contract for the second section of the line was awarded to Richard Fuller, of Hamilton, Ont., and extended from Swan River via Humboldt, at the junction of the Prince Albert and Battleford trails, crossing the South Saskatchewan at a point later known as Clark's Crossing, about 18 miles below where Saskatoon now stands, thence to Battleford and on to a point near where the Town of Leduc is built. To its terminus, the line followed the original survey of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which, keeping south of the Saskatchewan River, passed Edmonton by. At a later date the Canadian Northern Railway was built over practically the same route, but with Winnipeg as a starting point instead of Selkirk, and crossing the river to enter Edmonton. This western section of the Telegraph line was completed in November, 1876, with repair stations at Poplar Plains (some 50 miles west of Pelly); Richard Matheson and Walter Salsbury, linemen. Humboldt: George Weldon, lineman; Mrs. Weldon, operator. Battleford: John Little, superintendent and operator; Thomas Dewan and Bernard Tremont, linemen. No offices were opened west of Battleford at this time. None of those named are now living. Richard Matheson, who already had spent many years in the West, was a citizen of Battleford until 1887 when, catching the gold fever, he went into the Yukon and there died. Walter Salsbury later took service as agent and lineman at Henrietta, near the elbow of the Saskatchewan. He was somewhat of a recluse, but an exceptionally well-read man and a sterling character. He died of typhoid fever in the North Battleford Hospital December 31st, 1916.

George Weldon and his wife, being situated on the main trail to Winnipeg, were widely known and highly esteemed, their hospitality being freely extended to all who passed that way.

Mr. Weldon, upon the opening of the C.P.R., became the company's agent at Grenfell, which position he occupied until superannuated upon reaching the age limit set by the company.

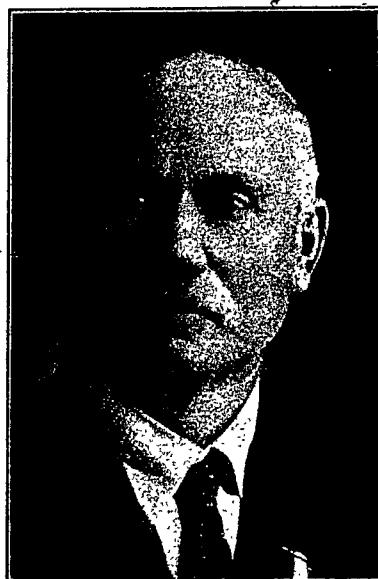
John Little, the superintendent, was an eccentric character with very strong likes and dislikes. He was good-hearted to a fault, but never forgave a man who offended him. As an instance, the writer and he were seated in the office one night when a "call" came over the wire from a distant office whose lineman he disliked. Upon my answering, the man told us that the Indians were battering in the door of his shanty and meant to kill him. Reaching to the telegraph key, Little asked: "Are you sure?" and upon receiving assurance that it was beyond doubt, he said to the terrified man that he hoped that the Indians would "make a good job of it." It may be added that no serious harm resulted. In the winter of 1880-81, Little and Dewan became partners in a ranch scheme and went to Montana to purchase breeding stock. Little never returned to Battleford, Dewan and he having had a disagreement. Later he entered the service of the C.P.R. as agent at Langdon, and died there in 1887.



THOMAS DEWAN  
*A Pioneer founder of Battleford*

Thomas Dewan, one of the original builders of the line, and later a lineman, was successively freighter, trader and business man, one of the founders of Battleford. He was well known and liked by every old-timer in the Territories. Always ready to help friend or stranger, he made many friends and no enemies. He remained a citizen of Battleford until his death, February 25th, 1912.

As an instance of the difficulties and perils frequently encountered by linemen travelling alone, the following incident may be cited: In March, 1877, Superintendent Little had occasion to send Dewan to Fort Carlton on an errand connected with supplies. At that time two dog trains were maintained at Battleford for the use of the linemen in winter travel. With one of these drawing the usual flat sled and his equipment Dewan set out early in the morning. He elected to travel on the north side of the river, the distance by this route being some 20 miles shorter owing to the bend of the river at the Elbow. When he left Battleford the day was clear and calm. A light snowfall during the night before had covered the earth with a mantle of white which sparkled in the strong rays of the March sun. When he had gone about 15 miles of the 90 his eyes began



JAMES MCKERNAN

*The Senior of the Old Timers of the original Telegraph staff*

to feel the effect of the glare, and by the time he had travelled 30 miles he was completely snow blind—one of the most painful afflictions known. In this dilemma, he decided to push on for Carlton. His lead dog had been purchased there a short time before, and he reasoned that his chances of making Carlton offered a greater chance of safety than if he attempted to retrace his way. He did not dare leave his sled for an instant, since to do so meant death. Throwing himself on the sled and wrapping a buffalo robe about him, he urged the dogs on, trusting that their instinct would direct them, there being no trail. Hour after hour he called words of encouragement to his dogs. At length, when almost discouraged, chilled to the marrow and suffering torture from his blinded eyes, he felt the dogs stop and heard voices. Quickly discovering his plight, kind hands assisted him into the Hudson's Bay Post at Carlton, where he was soon warmed, fed and otherwise ministered to. It was some days, however, before his eyes were sufficiently recovered to permit of his return. But for his own resourcefulness and the sagacity and endurance of his dogs, he must have perished.

Bernard Tremont, universally known as Barney Freeman was by birth a Belgian, and never altogether mastered the English tongue. Before coming to Canada he had lived several years in the Western States where he followed the occupation of cattleman and at times Indian fighter, for these were the times made familiar by Beadle's Dime Novels. He has told me of his brother being shot down by his side while they were driving cattle through Wyoming, and had frequently expressed his contempt for, and absence of fear regarding Indians. He remained as lineman during the period of Mr. Fuller's contract, and then took service with the Government, retaining his position until 1884. He then resigned, having entered into a partnership with Thomas Dewan when they established a ranch a few miles out of Battleford. Due, doubtless, to his feeling regarding the Indians as mentioned above, he refused to leave the ranch on the outbreak of the rebellion, and so became one of the first victims when they went on the warpath. He was killed in March, 1885, and in March, 1886, a tablet to his memory was placed in St. George's Episcopal Church, Battleford, by his former fellow-linemen.

No use was made of that portion of the line west of Battleford until 1877, when Mr. Fuller entered into a contract with James McKernan to maintain the line from a point 30 miles west of Battleford to its western terminus. Mr. McKernan associated with him in this work his brother, Robert McKernan, who selected Grizzly Bear Coulee, about midway between

Edmonton and Battleford, as his headquarters, while James McKernan settled at Hay Lakes, about 30 miles east of the western terminus of the line. No office was opened, but Mr. McKernan, being an operator, frequently sent and received messages, chiefly for Government officials passing through the country, as also for the North-West Mounted Police, whose headquarters were Fort Saskatchewan. The first message transmitted was sent by Major Jarvis, Fort Saskatchewan, to Col. Walker, commanding at Battleford, November 20th, 1877.

Mr. McKernan, still a resident of Edmonton, has had an eventful career. He was a member of the original Mounted Police Force organized in 1873, and took part in the famous march from Dufferin, Manitoba, to Macleod in 1874—the longest march recorded in modern military history—during which he had charge of, and was responsible for the entire water supply. Contrary to the general belief, little difficulty was experienced in finding a generous supply of good water throughout the march.

An interesting fact revealed by Mr. McKernan, which I have not seen noted elsewhere, was that the first official act of the N.W.M.P. after being sworn in at Lower Fort Garry, was the despatch of 10 men—of whom Mr. McKernan was one—to the north shore of Lake Winnipeg, in charge of Col. Macleod for the purpose of arresting a gang of whiskey peddlers. The round trip occupied 10 days and was entirely successful, all members of the gang being arrested and punished—an auspicious beginning for a force destined to become famous the world over.

In 1879, Mr. McKernan notified Mr. Fuller that he would do no more operating, his contract calling only for maintenance of the line. Mr. Fuller thereupon sent Alex. Taylor, as operator, to Hay Lakes, but he remained there only for a month or two, removing to Edmonton, where he remained until his death.

Edmonton was at that time little more than a Hudson's Bay Post with the addition of a number of free traders, but in 1878 the people of the village, feeling the need of telegraph connection, petitioned the Government to extend the line from its terminus to Edmonton, offering to defray the cost of extension if the Department would establish an office. The contractor, Mr. Fuller, offered to supply the necessary wire and other material free of charge. The offer was accepted, and, under the supervision of Mr. McKernan, the extension was made, the Hudson's Bay Company contributing the poles, and most of the labor. The line was completed on January 18th, 1879, and an office opened in a building opposite the Fort owned by Walters

& Irvine, Mr. Taylor being the first operator. Mr. Taylor held the position for a few months, being succeeded in June, 1880 by George Slack Wood. Mr. Wood was operator for three years when he resigned and left the country, re-appearing in 1885 as operator with General Middleton's force. He remained with the troops during the period of the rebellion, returning east with them, and later went to the United States.

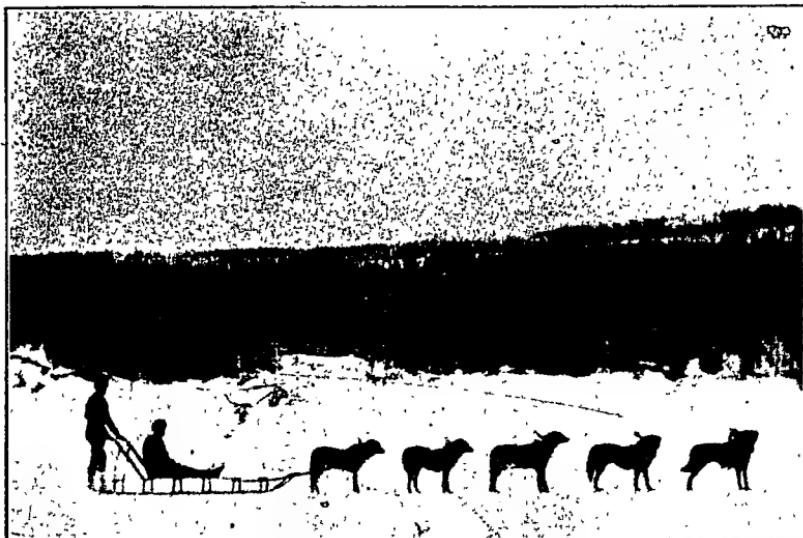
He was succeeded at Edmonton by Mr. Taylor, who again assumed the duties of agent and operator, a position which he held for several years, eventually resigning in order to enter business in a larger field. He died February 14th, 1916.

Upon completion of the line to Edmonton, the tariff was fixed by the contractors on the basis of \$3.00 for ten words Edmonton to Winnipeg; \$2.00, Battleford to Winnipeg, and \$1.00, Edmonton to Battleford. The Press rate was half a cent per word, the Herald and later the Bulletin using the wire freely.

During the years 1879-80 very few settlers came into the country, and but little telegraph business was transacted, the uncertainty of communication and the high tariff being added deterrents. The writer arrived in Battleford in October, 1880 and at once took charge of the Battleford office as chief operator. At the same time, A. V. Lindeberg took charge of Humboldt Station, succeeding George Weldon, the latter, however, remaining at Humboldt. During the winter Superintendent Little resigned and the writer succeeded him as superintendent for the contractor. Mr. Fuller's contract expired in June, 1881. He had fully expected it would be renewed, and I was instructed to carry on with that end in view. However, the Government of the day, apparently dissatisfied with the manner in which the line had been maintained and possibly under some political pressure, decided to take it over and make it a branch of the Public Works Department, to take effect in the summer of 1882. Accordingly, Mr. Fuller came to Battleford in July, 1881, disposed of his equipment and paid off his employees.

From the beginning much trouble was experienced in the attempt to maintain the line in a working condition, especially on the eastern section. The poles were poplar, a wood altogether unsuitable; the wire was much heavier than that ordinarily used for telegraph purposes. On the plains, buffalo, using the poles as scratching posts, overturned numbers of them, while the wire running through uncut, leafy groves lost so much current in wet weather that at such times it was impossible to telegraph any considerable distance. With linemen 100 miles or further

apart, their only conveyance a buckboard with a single horse over a trail without bridges and at times impassable, it was practically impossible to maintain continuous operation. In



*Repairing the Government Telegraph line.*

Spring and Autumn, prairie fires were the chief source of trouble. A fire starting in the southern portion of the country met no barrier until it reached the South Saskatchewan River and unless extinguished by rain, might burn over a vast area, destroying great numbers of poles as it progressed. Then, as later, the wire worked well and without interruption from the first frosts of Autumn until the coming of Spring. The position of lineman during these years was a particularly trying one. Far from trading posts or any source of supply, there was but little variety of food, and strangely enough few of the men had shot-guns despite the abundance of game. A few cases of scurvy developed, the victims coming to Battleford in the Spring for treatment. Often, too, provisions would give out or be spoiled because of rain coming through tent or shack while the occupant was absent repairing the line. On one occasion, the lineman at Poplar, returning home observed an Indian on horseback galloping away. Upon entering his shack, he found that his entire stock of provisions—not very large—had disappeared. Suspecting the Indian, he slipped a cartridge into his Winchester rifle and made off in pursuit. He had to ride some five miles before he came in sight of his quarry, who immediately increased his

speed. Finding that he could not overtake the red-man, he brought his rifle into play without any thought of doing injury, but expecting that the shot would have the effect of frightening the other into stopping. The result, however, was not what he had anticipated. The Indian, finding that there was no second shot, proceeded to shoot in turn, while the lineman, having no other cartridges, hurriedly decided to return home. This did not apparently satisfy the Indian, who, becoming pursuer in turn, followed his enemy to within half a mile of his home, firing at intervals all the time.

Some weeks later the Indian was arrested by the Police on charges of stealing and attempted murder. His defense was that he had stolen nothing; that while returning to his band he had been fired on by the lineman whom he believed had gone crazy, and that he himself had fired into the air with the object of frightening the other. In short, he contended that he was the aggrieved party and that he should be compensated for the trouble caused him. He was promptly acquitted.

During the years 1878 to 1884 numerous parties of surveyors were engaged in running meridian, base and township lines, preparatory to dividing the land into sections and quarter-sections. Being the capital and possessing a telegraph office, Battleford was a gathering point for the heads of these parties when it became necessary for them to communicate with their Department at Ottawa. With a mail but once in three weeks, communication by letter was out of the question. On one occasion, in 1879, while waiting for the line to be repaired, Mr. Wilkins, C.E., erected a sun-dial in front of the telegraph office. It was a most ingenious affair consisting of four arms so graduated that each threw a shadow on the other, showing the time at intervals of five minutes. It remained in working order for several seasons during which it was the standard for time the country over, Battleford office giving the time over the wire to the various points on the line. The first meteorological reports were telegraphed from Battleford in the Summer of 1879.

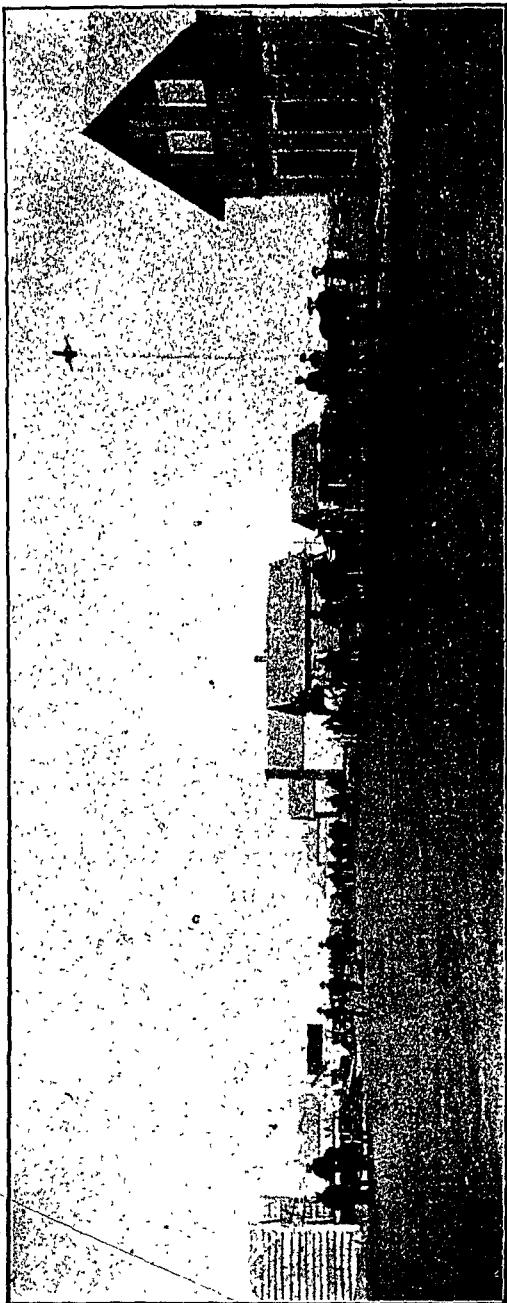
But it was not only in the transmission of telegrams that the wire found a use. At the head office at Battleford was a medical work, containing full instructions as to what should be done in cases of illness or accident. The operators at the various stations made use of this information when necessary, and advice was freely given to anyone who requested it. Rough doctoring, but frequently the means of alleviating suffering, and the best that could be done when there was no doctor within a radius of hundreds of miles. Later, as settlement increased and

doctors established themselves at points far apart, it was a matter of common practise for them to give advice to their patients over the wire. No charge was made for this service.

Another use made of the telegraph in its earlier years was its employment as a medium in long distance checker playing. Players at Battleford challenged those of Edmonton, and I remember that the late J. A. McDougall was one of the Edmonton players who occasionally took part. Later, when Qu'Appelle (then Troy) became the eastern terminus of the line, games were frequently played with that village whose leading player was the well known old-timer, Ace McLean. For a time Battleford had no player who could cope successfully with him until D. M. Finlayson brought in from the farm a young French-Canadian employed by him. He could speak very little English, but he could point out the moves for me to transmit. He won every game, both on that occasion and others following, until the interest died out.

But there were tragic events also in which the employees participated. About Christmas time in the Winter of 1881-82, a young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Weldon was taken seriously ill. No medical aid could be obtained, there being no doctor nearer than Rapid City. The child died, and the distracted parents, wishing to give their little one Christian burial, knew not what to do. Prince Albert was the nearest point at which there was a resident minister, and the trail was blocked with snow. There seemed no solution except to keep the little body frozen all winter. But the two linemen at the station, A. Lindberg and R. Finlayson, the youngest of the Finlayson brothers, rose to the occasion. Constructing a hand-sleigh, they fastened the body on it, and on snowshoes tramped 150 miles to Prince Albert, one man breaking trail while his companion drew the sled. The journey occupied several days, through an uninhabited country at the coldest season of the year. If the Victoria Cross were awarded for heroic acts of peace, these men surely earned it.

No steps were taken immediately following the termination of Mr. Fuller's contract to re-open the line. Finally, Mr. La Touche Tupper was sent over the line by the Department with instructions to re-open it for business and report upon its requirements. All the former employees were ultimately re-engaged with the exception of the writer who was replaced by Hugh Richardson, Jr., son of the resident stipendiary magistrate, the telegraph office being installed in the latter's residence, where the post office had also been established.



*Battleford, 1884*

The first building to the right is the telegraph and post office. The third building is A. Macdonald's store. The first figure on the right is Ronald Macdonald. In the first buggy is Robert Macdonald and Mrs. J. B. Parker. Leaning against the next vehicle is Alex. Macdonald (lately deceased), the owner of the townsite then laid out. The driver of the team is H. Gisborne, superintendent. McFarlane, Clouston and Latimer are also in the picture.

Having formed an attachment for Battleford; the writer accepted a proposition that he should take the position of teacher in a school which it was proposed to open. Up to this time, no public schools existed in the Territories, but upon the North West Council undertaking to pay half the salary, a board of trustees was appointed and the school officially opened. My recollection is that these trustees were nominated by the North West Council: P. G. Laurie, William Latimer and Wm. McKay. I held the position for a few months when I resigned to take other work, my successor being W. B. Cameron, well known author of "On the Trail of Big Bear."

At this time, announcement was made that the existing line east of Humboldt would be abandoned, and a new line constructed to Troy (now Qu'Appelle), where it would connect with the C.P.R. Telegraphs. The work was commenced in the Summer of 1882, starting from Troy, and late in that year reached Touchwood, about six miles from the Hudson's Bay Post of the same name. The name of the telegraph office was changed to Kutawa a few years later, when an office was opened at the Company's post. In the interim there was a gap between Kutawa and Humboldt, messages being carried between the two offices by the mail carrier, or given to any reliable traveller who might happen along. By bridging the gap, some 80 miles, in this way Edmonton and Battleford were enabled to keep in touch with eastern points without too great delay. [See F. N. Gisborne's report of 1883 in Appendix I.]

*Report on Government Telegraph Lines for Fiscal Year Ended  
30th June, 1883, by F. N. Gisborne, Superintendent.*

NORTH WEST TERRITORIES.

The lines in Manitoba and the North West Territories which had been formerly operated by the Department of Railways and Canals, were transferred to the Department of Public Works during the summer of 1882. At the time of transfer the lines which had been constructed were as follows:

|                                               |           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| From Prince Arthur's Landing to Winnipeg, via |           |
| Selkirk                                       | 433 miles |
| From Selkirk to Edmonton, via Humboldt        | 812 "     |
| The entire length being                       | 1,245 "   |

But the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway having been altered, the cost of maintaining an originally cheaply constructed pioneer line (already much out of repair) through a swampy and wooded country being very costly, with no possibility of an appreciable revenue, it was deemed advisable to abandon *in toto* that section which extends from Selkirk to Humboldt, a distance of 426 (corrected to 416) miles; and, in order to connect the Humboldt to Edmonton, 396 miles section, with the telegraph system of the North West Provinces, a line between Qu'Appelle Station (on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway) and Humboldt, a distance of 141 miles, was begun during the Autumn of 1882, and completed during the past Summer, communication being now established between Edmonton and Winnipeg via Qu'Appelle Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway telegraph line. The line now controlled and operated by the Department of Public Works in the North West Provinces is, therefore, at the present time as follows:

Prince Arthur's Landing to Winnipeg, via Selkirk 433 miles  
Qu'Appelle Station, via Humboldt to Edmonton 537 "

Total ..... 970 "

And to this is being added a branch line extending from (the) Saskatchewan to Prince Albert, a distance approximating 100 miles.

In the meantime, organization of a Telegraph Branch had been completed at Ottawa, within the Department of Public Works, of which Hon. Charles Tupper was the Minister.

F. N. Gisborne, who had been associated with Cyrus Field in the laying of the first Atlantic Cable, was appointed General Superintendent; D. H. Keeley, Assistant General Superintendent, and Hartley Gisborne, son of F. N. Gisborne, District Superintendent for North West Lines, with headquarters at Battleford, which place he reached during the Summer of 1882. Upon his arrival the writer again took the position of operator at Battleford, Mr. Richardson taking the lineman's work, in addition to his duties as postmaster. Both offices were installed in the original telegraph building on the flat within a few yards of the Battle River. A partnership was formed under the name of Richardson & Macdonald, doing a general agency business. This was permitted by the Department, it being recognized that the salaries paid—the maximum being \$60.00 per month—made necessary some additional source of income. In July, 1883, the

firm brought to Battleford for Finlayson Bros., the first binder used in the Territories, bought oats, then practically the only grain grown, which it retailed chiefly to survey parties; and, in fact, dealt in any commodity which offered. At this time coins of any denomination were very scarce, and to fill the want the firm issued tokens, which had been printed in the Herald office, good for 10, 25 and 50 cents each. These were signed by the firm and freely accepted by all members of the community. Several series were issued. A very large number were never presented for payment, having been carried away by travellers or sent east as curios. The partnership continued until July, 1884, when the Government ordered that the Post Office and Telegraph Office be operated in separate buildings, Mr. Richardson retaining the post office, while the writer was appointed chief operator of the line. This position he held until the end of the year when Mr. Richardson was, by order of the Department, restored to the post of operator, retaining, in addition, his place as postmaster.

To the firm is due the name of the village and district known as Bresaylor. In 1882, a large group of settlers from Manitoba selected lands some 35 miles west of Battleford. In the beginning no post office was established, but to accommodate the people a bag containing their mail was sent by the Edmonton mail carrier once in three weeks which was addressed "Taylor Settlement," and left at the most convenient house. I suggested that we give the settlement a name by a combination of the names of the principal families. For this purpose we selected the Bremers, Sayers and Taylors, borrowing a syllable from each in the order named, this combination appealing to us as the most euphonious, and that is how *Bresaylor* came into being.

During the Summer of 1883, the people of Prince Albert petitioned the Government to give them telegraph connection, offering to provide the necessary poles to carry the wire to the nearest point on the existing line. The Government received the request favorably and arranged to open an office at what was later known as Clark's Crossing, where the main line crossed the river, the building being erected on the west bank. Connection was made with Prince Albert at this point. The branch was completed two or three days before Christmas of 1883, and Mr. Gisborne proceeded to Prince Albert to open the office and install the operator, Mr. A. A. Porter. Mr. Gisborne had, unknown to the citizens, decided to place the office in the Hudson's Bay Post at Goshen, some four miles from the village of Prince Albert. The immediate result was a near riot, some wire and a few poles being torn down by the angry populace.



*Citizens of Battleford, 1884*  
Reading from left to right—Johnstone, Clouston, Williamson, Merigold; Gisborne, Young, Macdonald, J. S.; Smart, W. H.; Strang; Wyld, R. C.

and Mr. Gisborne's person threatened, he in turn bringing action against several of those implicated. The matter was promptly reported by wire to the Minister at Ottawa, Sir Hector Langevin, who at once replied deprecating the action of the citizens in taking the law into their own hands, but asserting that he personally had not been advised of the arrangement and that he was desirous of meeting the wishes of the citizens. Eventually, charges were withdrawn and the matter settled by the establishment of offices both at Prince Albert and Goshen. So was the Telegraph born at Prince Albert.

Work being scarce in these early years and Battleford being the headquarters of the Government Telegraph Service, many of the residents took positions with it for longer or shorter periods. Many names familiar to old-timers are found on its list of employees. In 1882, Robert Patton was lineman west of Battleford, having for assistant W. B. Cameron. In 1883, Robert C. Macdonald, afterwards superintendent, was agent-lineman at Humboldt. J. H. Sully succeeded R. Patton. In 1884, William Latimer succeeded Tremont and J. Dyke-Parker and W. C. Gillies were appointed linemen at Eleanor, S. B. McFarlane taking a similar position at Battleford. Of these, Cameron, McFarlane and Gillies are at present residents of Vancouver, Parker entered the ministry and is now rector of the Anglican Church at Qu'Appelle. Wm. Latimer died June 15th, 1899, and Robt. C. Macdonald, November 29, 1925. Of Patton and Sully, I have lost trace.

In June, 1882, William McKay (better known to old-timers as 'Billy') was appointed lineman at Edmonton, his beat extending to Grizzly Bear Coulee, some 150 miles, a tremendous distance for one man to cover with a horse and buckboard through a district which at that time contained not one settler. This beat he patrolled until the course of the line was changed in 1887 when, with linemen stationed at Fort Pitt and Saddle Lake, the work became much lighter. For 25 years Mr. McKay held his place—one of the most efficient and dependable men who ever occupied such a position. He was one of the fortunate few who, while doing his work, acquired a competency. He died at Edmonton.

William Latimer, who was a lineman at Battleford at the breaking out of the Rebellion, was, like Jas. McKernan, a veteran of the N.W.M. Police of 1873. He was, however, one of those badly injured in the historic stampede of the horses during a storm at Dufferin just before the expedition set out, and so missed accompanying the Force on its westward march. Retiring from the Police in 1880, he assisted greatly in building

up the town of Battleford, and was one of its most respected citizens. W. C. Gillis was also an ex-member of the Police. During the Rebellion, in company with McKay, of Edmonton, he spent several weeks on the line at the risk of his life in the endeavour to keep the wire working between Edmonton and Eleanor. He remained in the service for many years as agent at Pakan (then called Victoria) and later at Edmonton, resigning to take up other work. J. Dyke-Parker, who had come into Edmonton from his post at Eleanor, joined the Scouts and took part in the operations of Strange's Column until the surrender of Big Bear, when he resumed his duties as lineman. S. B. Macfarlane, also a lineman during the trouble, was later an agent of the C.P. Railway on the Medicine Hat-Lethbridge branch, and afterwards for many years agent of the Government Telegraphs at Lilooet, B.C., where he took a prominent part in the affairs of the town until his retirement to Vancouver.

When an office was opened at Clark's Crossing in 1884, Richard J. Molloy, of Charlottetown, P.E.I., who had been a newspaper publisher there, was appointed agent, Mr. Molloy having been a telegraph operator prior to becoming an editor. When, in 1887, it was decided to grant federal representation to the Territories, Mr. Molloy was chosen by the people of his district as the Conservative nominee for Saskatchewan, while the Conservatives of Prince Albert, in the same constituency, selected D. H. Macdowall. The Liberal standard-bearer was ex-Governor Laird, but Liberal opposition was negligible at that time. There seemed little difference in the strength of the Conservative contestants, but eventually at the request—or command—of Sir Hector Langevin, Mr. Molloy withdrew, much against the wishes of his supporters and to the regret of the telegraph employees, who had hoped to see one of their number in the federal parliament. He remained in the service for several years, eventually taking a position with the C.P. Railway at Qu'Appelle, where he was very popular. He died in Brandon on September 1st, 1900.

In March, 1885, came the Rebellion, the causes of which have been dealt with by others and need not be gone into here. But it was the Rebellion which proved the incalculable value of the telegraph line and abundantly justified its construction. Without it the trouble could not possibly have been brought to an end during that year. Had there been no telegraph, I am satisfied that many additional bands of Indians would have joined those of their kinsmen who had gone on the warpath: For the Indians had the "Moccasin Telegraph," swift runners and horsemen, knowing every foot of the country, who carried

the alarm from one reserve to another, always with boastful lies of great victories gained over the Whites. Without the wire, the condition of affairs throughout the whole northern country would have been absolutely unknown outside, for the Police were too few and too much occupied to establish a patrol to the newly-built railway to the south. Indeed, under the conditions, such an arrangement would have been impossible, and a chaotic state of affairs must have resulted. Police officers, Indian agents and missionaries did splendid work in pacifying and persuading the Indians of many reserves from rising, but lacking the information they received by way of the telegraph, their efforts would have availed but little. A knowledge of the fact that troops were on their way did more to keep the Indians on their reserves than all other influences combined. Indeed, had the rebels possessed a capable leader, the results might have been disastrous, in any case, for it would have been a comparatively easy matter to have cut and carried away sections of the wire, which would have put it out of operation until repaired—a work hazardous in the extreme. The wire was cut on a few occasions, leaving it on the ground, but these were ordinary breaks which were easily repaired by linemen who, however, took great chances of being ambushed. The Rebellion cost the country about 7 millions of dollars, but without the telegraph, it would have cost many times that sum, while the loss of life would have been infinitely greater. From a fairly complete knowledge of the conditions existing at the time, I am convinced that only individual Indians kept the peace from unselfish motives. And, considering the difficulties of the elders in restraining their young braves, for whom war spelt glory and the glittering promises of the rebel leaders, this is scarcely to be wondered at.

On March 13 I left Battleford for Ottawa in company with R. C. Laurie and my brother, the late R. C. Macdonald. Mr. Laurie, like myself, was bound for Ottawa, while my brother was conveying us to Swift Current, intending an immediate return to Battleford. While trouble had been brewing all winter, no overt act had been committed as yet, and it was hoped that quiet would be restored without the shedding of blood. But, on our arrival at Swift Current, we were horrified to learn that, while we were on the trail, the Indians through whose reserves we had passed had risen and murdered Tremont and Payne, the latter a farm instructor on the Stony Reserve. Arriving at Winnipeg, Mr. Laurie joined the 90th Regiment as lieutenant, while I proceeded on my way as far as Toronto. Here I wired the Department, offering my services, and was instructed

to hold myself in readiness to join Col. Otter, who was in command of the forces ordered to relieve beleaguered Battleford.

Returning via the United States with a ticket to Swift Current, I was met at Qu'Appelle with a message that I was to join General Middleton's Column instead. I was ordered to Fort Qu'Appelle, which was being used as a base for supplies, to take charge there until General Middleton reached Clark's Crossing, when I was to join him. En route from Qu'Appelle to Clark's Crossing, G. S. Wood was in charge of the telegraph service. The trail paralleled the wire, and he cut in at each stop to send or receive telegrams. On the arrival of the Column at Clark's Crossing, I was instructed to join it at once. Leaving Fort Qu'Appelle at mid-day by buckboard express which carried mail for the troops, we had a late supper at Touchwood, and, continuing our drive, reached Humboldt at 3 a.m., having driven 125 miles in 14 hours with two changes of horses.

We reached the Crossing at 10 p.m., crossed the river at midnight and I was awakened the next morning in Mr. Molloy's residence by the sound of the guns in action at Fish Creek.

When General Middleton left the Crossing on April 23rd, it was intended that the telegraph line to Prince Albert should be utilized, Mr. Wood sending telegrams to me to be repeated over the main line to Qu'Appelle. But after one or two futile attempts to carry out this arrangement, it was abandoned. The wire had been broken in so many places, and was in such bad condition that it was found more expeditious to send mounted couriers direct to the Crossing than to attempt maintaining the line. On the 24th, following the Fish Creek engagement, couriers arrived with official despatches and private telegrams, while we were swamped with press messages, each correspondent naturally desirous of obtaining priority. However, apart from the official despatches, each was forwarded in order of the time filed, a procedure which was maintained throughout the campaign. In the beginning, Mr. Molloy was my only assistant, and, as he had to keep a strict record of all messages handled and look after all outside matters requiring attention, my time was fully occupied for 16 hours each day. Later I was assisted by Alex. Lanskail, of Toronto, one of the finest operators in Canada, who took charge of the night work. Harry Wilson, also, of Toronto, a well known old-time operator, was in charge at Humboldt where the Body Guard and the united 12th and 35th Battalions had been concentrated in readiness to advance should their services be required. Herbert McCleneghan was in charge at Fort Qu'Appelle. Mr. McCleneghan entered the service the following year, being agent and circuit manager at various points on the

line until his death at Onion Lake April 18th, 1924. Two operators were kept at Qu'Appelle solely for our work, and as there were few interruptions to the working of the wire, and these quickly attended to by Superintendent Gisborne, an excellent service was maintained between Battleford and Qu'Appelle throughout the campaign. The fear of an Indian raid was our greatest worry. A company of the Midland Battalion was stationed across the river, but, so far as we were concerned, it might as well have been in Port Hope, had the Indians made a descent on us. Immediately following the fight at Cut Knife Hill, General Middleton sent me a note stating that a report had reached him that Poundmaker was about to attempt to join Riel, warning us to keep a sharp lookout, as such action would necessarily take the Indians into our vicinity. Mr. Molloy had his wife and several young children in the house and it was impossible to send them to any safer place. Naturally this added greatly to the anxiety of the parents, though Mrs. Molloy was brave and cheerful throughout.

Saskatoon, first settled in 1882, was at that time a small hamlet on the east bank of the river. Immediately upon learning of the result at Fish Creek, the residents of the village offered to provide hospital accommodation for the wounded, an offer gratefully accepted by General Middleton. Ambulances were improvised by stretching skins across wagons, and on these the wounded were laid and conveyed to Saskatoon, a distance of about 30 miles. On various occasions, I visited the wounded, some of whom were personal friends, and found them thoroughly appreciative of the unselfish kindness of the people of Saskatoon, who left nothing undone that could aid in restoring them to health or relieve the tedium of convalescence. Among the patients later on was Riel's secretary, with whom I held several conversations, and who apparently was much surprised to find himself treated as kindly as the others.

Life at Clark's Crossing during these days was full of interest, excitement and color. Convoys of teams arrived with supplies, unloaded and returned to Fort Qu'Appelle, couriers from General Middleton came and went, newspaper correspondents, anxious to give their papers the latest and most sensational news, accepted the wildest rumors and telegraphed them as facts, unwilling to wait until the reports were verified or disproven. As operator, I received many telegrams from people in the East praying for news of relatives, who frequently were in another part of the country. Of course, realizing their great anxiety, whenever there was a chance of obtaining information by personal enquiry or by telegraph, I did so, and advised the relatives accordingly.

There was at this time no telegraph communication west of Battleford. Indians were swarming throughout that district, making it impossible to keep the line in repair.

While the troops were on their way to Batoche and Prince Albert, large quantities of supplies were arriving at Clark's Crossing, the steamer "Northcote" bringing a full load from Swift Current Crossing, while trains of wagons loaded at Fort Qu'Appelle added constantly to the bulk of stores. There were literally thousands of packages of canned beef, sugar, tea, flour and other provisions piled to a height of three to five feet on the west bank of the river and within a few feet of the water on a flat shore. One morning the operator at Swift Current telegraphed to me that the river was in flood, and, knowing from experience how rapidly the river rose in these June floods, I hunted up the officer in charge of the supplies and advised him as to the conditions. He answered to the effect that he was quite capable of doing his duty without outside advice. But when the flood arrived 36 hours later, there was a great scurrying to secure men from the Midlands Regiment across the river to salvage the supplies. A scow brought over was loaded to capacity and an attempt made to take it back across the swollen river. But before reaching the further bank it sank, the men having a narrow escape for their lives, while the contents of the barge went to the bottom of the stream. Meantime, the water was rising faster than the workers could remove the goods to safety from the sandy shore, and hundreds of cases, undermined by the water, toppled into the river and were carried away by the current. At some future day, dredges deepening the river may come upon deposits of canned corned beef. So far as I know, the matter was never made a subject of investigation.

Batoche was taken May 12th. Four days later three Mounted Police Scouts, Houri, Armstrong and Dale (or Diehl) happened upon Riel some three miles from General Middleton's Camp. He was quite willing, even anxious to surrender, but feared personal violence from the troops. The scouts, however, re-assured him, pointing out that he was unknown, and they at once conducted him to the General's tent without attracting attention from any quarter. That evening these same scouts arrived at Clark's Crossing with despatches from the General to the Minister of Militia, advising of Riel's capture and the ending of the Rebellion so far as this district was concerned. Houri also brought for me from the General instructions that no mention of the event was to be made on the wire, and that under no circumstances were newspaper correspondents or

others to be permitted to make it known over the telegraph. This order was due to the fact that it had been decided to take Riel to Ottawa for trial, and the General feared demonstrations en route should it become known that Riel was on the train. However, on the following day, probably due to instructions from Ottawa, I was advised that Riel was to be taken to Regina, and the taboo regarding information was off. Houri, to whom the rebel chief surrendered, had in his possession a revolver, fully loaded, handed over by Riel. It was of so small a calibre that it could have been carried in the vest pocket. He offered me one of the cartridges from the cylinder, and was surprised to find that I placed no value on it. Shortly after the Scouts had left the General's camp to come to the Crossing, it became known that Riel had been taken and the majority of the press correspondents hurried to the telegraph office to advise their various papers. I showed them the General's prohibition, and with one exception they all accepted the situation gracefully. This man stormed and insisted that I take his copy despite the General's veto. Finding threats and storming of no avail, he went away, returning an hour later gleefully announcing that he had secured a courier to carry his correspondence to Humboldt, the nearest telegraph office, some 60 miles east. I replied that I was much obliged for the information since I would at once telegraph the operator not to send it—a contingency which evidently had not occurred to him. I believe he must have sent a second courier after the first as none ever reached Humboldt.

Two days later Riel was started on his way to Regina by the steamer Northcote—a journey which was to prove his last—in charge of Captain G. H. Young. The steamer halted at Clark's Crossing for about an hour in order to despatch telegrams, and Captain Young took me to the boat to meet Riel, who was dressed quietly, and who in manner and appearance was as unlike a desperado or rebel chief as was possible to imagine. His captors were treating him courteously and he appeared to have the liberty of the boat, though no doubt he was being closely watched.

After Batoche, the troops moved on to Prince Albert where such Indians of the district as had arisen, surrendered. Then the General, with his forces and with additional troops from Battleford, proceeded by steamers to Fort Pitt in order to effect the capture of Big Bear and his allies, Pitt being reached on June 2nd. The troops gone, there was little telegraphing to do at Clark's Crossing, and I was ordered to proceed to Pitt, which order I obeyed, arriving there by steamer on the heels of the military forces. The telegraph line passed about 40 miles south

of Pitt, and I was given a lineman, a horse and buckboard, with seven men of "B" Battery as escort, and instructed to cut in on the wire and open an office at the nearest point, which was a little north of where Marshall Station is now. Here, in a park-like glade we pitched our tents and established an office which was called Straubenzie, after Col. Straubenzie, a Crimean veteran attached to General Middleton's staff. During the ensuing month, the name became a familiar one in the Canadian newspapers, all news of the Big Bear chase being sent through this office. Mounted couriers arrived and departed daily, bearing despatches to and from the Department at Ottawa, as also by courtesy press reports for the newspapers. Telegrams interchanged between the General and the Militia Department were a medley of ordinary English words and others adapted from Slater's Code, with which I was familiar, and, as a result, knew the contents of all messages handled by me. Throughout the campaign I was impressed by the reluctance of the General to permit the troops to take any avoidable chance against the enemy, with the evident desire of sparing his civilian soldiers as much as possible. With this view, his subordinates were not in agreement, claiming that there would be less loss of life were the troops permitted to make direct attacks. On the morning of the final day at Batoche this difference of opinion was so accentuated as to cause strained relations, the officers in the afternoon, headed by Colonel Williams, taking matters into their own hands and ordering a charge without reference to the General, who at the moment was in his tent. The charge having been successful and virtually ending the campaign so far as the Metis were concerned, the matter, by common consent, was dropped. Officially, the General was given credit for the successful ending.

Once only while at Straubenzie was the wire tampered with, when it was apparently hacked through with a hatchet about four miles from camp. Interruptions occurred a few times, but these were accidental and never of long duration, though we could not as yet get through to Edmonton. Life here, however, was far from being all cakes and ale. We suffered greatly from lack of food, as, except for forwarding despatches, the military authorities appeared to have forgotten, or to have overlooked our existence. Upon one occasion, we lived for three days on a pot of beans, which the cook had boiled upon receiving them. We had not even hardtack to accompany them, the result being that when the beans went sour, as they were certain to do in hot weather, we all suffered from what appeared to be ptomaine poisoning. I had been sending in urgent letters to headquarters pointing out our situation, finally receiving an apologetic letter

from Colonel Osbörne Smith, who had charge of the commissariat, stating that different parcels of supplies intended for us had, through mistake, been forwarded to other camps. With the note came a quantity of provisions, hard tack, corned beef, beans and tea, sufficient to cover our present needs, but at no time did we receive regular supplies. When I had been at Straubenzie about two weeks, the men of "B" Battery received orders to



*Wood Mountain*

Police Headquarters and Government Telegraph Office, where Sitting Bull surrendered to Inspector Crozier, 1877. Figures in photograph: Dr. Haultain and J. Stuart Macdonald. Photo taken by Superintendent Jarvis.

rejoin their command, and an equal number of men from the Mounted Police replaced them. The men of the Battery had been badly off in the matter of clothing, but they were Beau Brummels as compared with the Police. The latter had been scouting the woods in quest of Big Bear for some weeks, until both inner and outer garments were reduced to tatters. For shirts, they wore discarded flour sacks through which openings had been made for heads and arms, while what uniforms they possessed were mostly rags. Going out of my tent one warm afternoon, I noticed several of them squatted down, nude to the waist, and apparently absorbed in watching something on the ground. Curious to see what was holding their attention, I strolled over to Constable Bell, who was nearest, to question him when I saw that his apology for a shirt was spread over an ant-hill, of which there were many in the vicinity. I said to him, "Where is Corporal McMinn, he appears to be the only

absentee from the party?" He answered: "The Corporal is behind that bluff; he has two ant-hills." But despite their hardships in the matter of food and clothes, and the fact that they received little consideration from some of the militia authorities, these men were ever ready to undertake any duty which presented itself. And let me say here that the Mounted Police had a much larger share in putting down the Rebellion than they have been given credit for, and I speak as one who was in a position to know. General Middleton's attitude towards them was, if not unfriendly, at least not cordial, and this disposition was reflected in some degree in the stand taken by a few of his subordinates. This, however, was not true of such of the Militia as were stationed at Battleford, where the relations of the two forces were at once cordial and appreciative.

Towards the end of my stay at Straubenzie, Corporal McMinn and I, while riding along the line, came upon a solitary mounted Indian. Upon questioning him, he explained that he had taken no part in the Rebellion; that he had been on a visit to relatives at Edmonton, and was returning to his reserve near Battleford. As Poundmaker had surrendered and there was now no trouble south of the river, we allowed him to proceed. McMinn's comrades, however, credited him with having shot the Indian, and only last season, 42 years later, I heard the story told as a fact with a wealth of detail. Probably much history is made in the same fashion.

Late one evening a courier brought from headquarters a number of important telegrams, most of which contained instructions to various Commanding Officers regarding the movement of troops. I had barely started sending these when the wire ceased working. From the fact that a slight current came through, I knew that the wire was on the ground. By five o'clock the following morning, the lineman and I were on our way eastward, taking the despatches with us. After some 20 miles we came upon the wire lying on the ground for a distance of about 100 yards. To effect a circuit, it was necessary to find a moist place in which to ground the wire, but although we dug some distance we could obtain no sign of dampness. In this dilemma I, being bookish, remembered Gulliver's action at a critical time, and repeating the incident to Joe, suggested that he follow Gulliver's example. But Joe's sense of decorum was outraged, and he vehemently protested that he had not come from Montreal and risked his life a hundred times among savages to undertake tasks such as this. Then I told him that I would return in five minutes and if when I returned the wire was not working, he should consider himself discharged, and

that he would have to get back to Montreal as best he could—which, of course, was sheer bluff. But, on my return, the wire was working clearly, and the "ground" held long enough for me to get the despatches through to their destinations.

In the latter days of June, Big Bear's prisoners, aided by the Wood Creeks who had grown tired of their allies from the plains, escaped in small groups and falling in with detachments who were searching for them were, by degrees, brought into Pitt. By the end of the month all were in safety, hungry, ragged, tired to exhaustion, but no longer in dread of massacre. By this time, Big Bear, driven from point to point until unable to continue, surrendered to the Police near Carlton. With his surrender, the final act was complete, the Rebellion was over, and the troops at Fort Pitt, their work done, were glad to embark on the steamers which were to carry them eastward.

While the trouble in the northern part of the Territories was at its height, there was more or less unrest in the south and the Government hurriedly constructed telegraph lines from Calgary to Macleod and Lethbridge and from Moose Jaw to Wood Mountain, the latter place being the headquarters of a Mounted Police Division. This latter line was built under the direction of Mr. John McMillan, the present manager of the C.P.R. Telegraphs, then a young man under twenty. There was no trail, but Andre Gaudry, a well-known half-breed, undertook to guide the builders by the shortest route. The line was completed at the end of June and on July 4th, the day on which the troops commenced their homeward journey, and on which Colonel Williams died aboard the steamer North-West, I was ordered to proceed to Wood Mountain and open an office there. Arriving at Wood Mountain, I found the Post in charge of Inspector (later Superintendent) A. R. Macdonnel, who, in addition to the regular Police Force, was in command of a body of scouts recruited from the Regina and Moose Jaw districts. There was very little disaffection among the resident half-breeds, a number of whom were amalgamated with the Scouts, but the nearness of the Montana boundary left the country open to raids from horse thieves and other bad characters with whom northern Montana was at that time infested. In addition, after Batoche, many of the rebels making their escape to Montana, passed that way and it was feared that they might be tempted to commit depredations while enroute. Police patrols were established eastward to Wood End and west to connect with a similar patrol from the Cypress Hills. The Summer was a busy and exciting one, but with the coming of Winter nomadic travel ceased and

the majority of the men, including myself, were withdrawn to Regina, returning the following Spring with Major Gagnon in command.

The Telegraph Office at Wood Mountain was installed in the Officers' Quarters, which were comprised of a series of squat log buildings loosely connected, comprising four rooms in all. The roof was of sods, and during heavy rains leaked so badly that we were compelled to shift our table and our beds to that part of the rooms where the least water came through. It was in this building that Sitting Bull surrendered to Major Crozier after the Custer massacre. In 1888, however, new frame quarters were built, the contractor being the late R. H. Williams, of Regina, after which living conditions were much improved. Major Jarvis succeeded Major Gagnon as Commanding Officer, with them being associated at different times Inspectors Wattam, Drayner, Baker and Primrose, the latter being at present Police Magistrate for Edmonton.

Shortly after opening the office at Wood Mountain, the Department sent a pair of telephones for experimental purposes, one of which was installed at Wood Mountain, the other at Moose Jaw. These were, to the best of my knowledge, the first telephones reaching the Territories, and, although many improvements have been made since that time, these instruments worked as clearly as those of today. On one occasion, Agent Rutherford, of Moose Jaw, got a Sioux Indian into the office while I got another into mine where, under the guidance of J. H. Thomson, who spoke Sioux fluently, he was instructed how to proceed. It was amusing to watch the look of amazement that came over his countenance as he recognized the voice of the speaker who he knew had gone to Moose Jaw. He then spoke in turn, receiving a reply, whereupon he dropped the receiver and turning to Thomson said excitedly: "If it costs a pony, I'm going to have one of those things; it speaks Sioux as well as I do." However, the reaction of another Indian on the following day was altogether different. Having just returned from a hunt, he had not learned of his friend's experience and when he heard the voice of his relative, he rushed into the adjoining room expecting to find him there. Then, exclaiming that the box contained a devil, he hurried from the building and never entered it again.

I remained at Wood Mountain until the Spring of 1890, when I was succeeded by J. H. Thomson, to whom I had taught telegraphy, and who continued there as agent until his death in March, 1923. Thomson was an ex-policeman, having joined the Force in 1876. He was a man of good education and at the

same time a skilled mechanician. His whole lifetime in the West was spent close to the Montana boundary, where he was the best known and one of the most highly respected pioneers of Southern Saskatchewan. He had an intimate knowledge of the Sioux language and character, and was of great service to the Government in their negotiations with that people.

In the Fall of 1884 the Department decided to change the route of the line between Battleford and Edmonton. There was at this time no settlement, except at Bresaylor, throughout the district through which the line passed, while Indian Agencies at Onion Lake and Saddle Lake, on the north side of the river, were without communication of any kind. It was, therefore, decided to erect a new line from Battleford, crossing the river at Fort Pitt, with offices at Pitt, Mooswa, Saddle Lake, Victoria (now Pakan) and Fort Saskatchewan. The breaking out of the Rebellion prevented this change being put into effect immediately, the work commencing in the Spring of 1886. Between Battleford and Pitt an innovation was made in that the poles were of iron, hollow cylinders 15 feet high,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, with a double ground plate to hold them firmly. The experiment was a thorough success, the poles immune to prairie fires, lightning and other foes of wooden poles, remained in place until the line was abandoned 40 years later. From Pitt to Edmonton the line was built of tamarack poles under the direction of Lineman McKay, with G. H. Clouston, of Battleford, as foreman of the work.

In September, 1886, an office was opened at Henrietta, near the elbow of the North Saskatchewan, with L. P. O. Noel as agent. Mr. Noel, then a youth of 16, remained in the Service for many years, for the greater part of the time as agent at Battleford. He ultimately resigned to enter the Department of the Interior as Agent of Dominion Lands, a position which he still holds as agent at Winnipeg.

Naturally many changes in personnel have occurred since the inception of the Service. F. N. Gisborne, the first General Superintendent, was on his death succeeded by D. H. Keeley, who held the position until 1925 when he was superannuated, dying in the following year. Mr. Keeley was succeeded in the position by the present incumbent, Major J. E. Gobeil, M.C., who had for many years been Technical Assistant to the General Superintendent.

In the West, Mr. Hartley Gisborne retired at the end of 1897, being succeeded by the writer, who in 1905 was promoted to be General Inspector of Western Lines. He, in turn, was

succeeded by his brother, R. C. Macdonald, who retired in 1924 and was succeeded by Mr. J. D. Noel, who had been for some years Superintendent of the Saskatchewan Division, and who now took charge of both provinces.

The greater portion of the original lines have been abandoned, owing to the fact that the commercial telegraph companies now occupy the districts once served by the Government lines, but much outlying territory is still served by the latter. Hudson's Hope, B.C., at the head of the navigation of the Peace, is the terminus of one line commencing at Edmonton. This line serves many important intervening points—Fort St. John, Pouce Coupe, Grande Prairie, Peace River and others. From Athabasca a line extends down the river to McMurray, while a second line from Athabasca runs eastward to Lac La Biche, serving points between. Another runs from Battleford north to Isle la Crosse, a distance of 300 miles, and is an important factor in opening that district to settlement. As the country develops, it will be found necessary, as the commercial companies will not undertake this work until settlement warrants financial returns on the investment.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the progress made in the former North-West Territories in a single generation than a comparison of the telegraph business of 35 years ago and that of today. In 1891, the writer was joint agent at Moose Jaw for the Government Telegraph Service and the C.P.R. Telegraphs. At that time he did all the commercial telegraph work of Moose Jaw, and, in addition, delivered telegrams received and did such work for the railway as was not handled by the despatchers, of whom there were three: A. Wilcox, J. Rutherford and C. D. Fisher, the former of whom is still in harness as Assistant Manager of the Canadian National Railway at Winnipeg. Today there are some 70 telegraph employees in Moose Jaw. An even more striking example is furnished by the growth at Edmonton. In 1898, the combined business of the C.P.R. and the Government was handled by the Government Agent, George Voyer, and later by his successor, Sam McNamara, while today there are 145 employees on the staffs of the different telegraph companies. A tremendous expansion in 30 years!

# Appendix

## 1. *Report of F. N. Gisborne*

### TELEGRAPH LINES —NORTH WEST TERRITORIES

Ottawa, 8th November, 1883.

Sir,—I have the honour to report that I left Ottawa, August 22nd, and arrived at Winnipeg, via New York and Chicago, on the 26th of the same month, having meanwhile examined the Postal and Rapid Systems of telegraphy, between the two latter cities, and also several systems of telephony to which I shall refer in a separate report when treating upon such subjects.

Having purchased the necessary outfit, viz: a pair of horses, harness, buckboard, etc., etc., and attended to various matters of business connected with line construction contracts in progress, I left Winnipeg for Qu'Appelle Station on Saturday, September 1st, and having completed all requirements on Monday, the 3rd, started the following morning for Fort Qu'Appelle accompanied by one man, and by Mr. Hartley Gisborne, the District Superintendent (in a single horse buckboard) then en route for his new headquarters at Battleford, as directed by the Minister of Public Works.

When at Fort Qu'Appelle, I found it necessary to make arrangements for a new station house, as Mr. Clarke then notified me that from 1st January next he should charge \$10 a month rental for a small corner in his dwelling house, plus a large estimate for fuel and light. Versus such demand, a central town lot upon which a well-built, two-roomed house has been erected, was offered to the Government either at cost price, viz: \$360, or at a rental of \$8 a month, and I recommend that the offer of purchase be accepted.

The land between Qu'Appelle Station and Fort Qu'Appelle (eighteen miles), is good and well adapted for settlement, and the telegraph line has been substantially erected upon the winter trail, which is approximate to the summer route of travel.

After passing over a well-watered and wooded prairie country for twenty-five miles, bad weather overtook us, and during the ensuing night our horses, though hobbled, were

stolen. Our District Superintendent's pony was found next evening and a most diligent search was instituted during two subsequent days, both Indians and half-breeds being employed under a promised reward of \$50, if successful in finding them, but without avail, and I was finally necessitated to return to Fort Qu'Appelle to procure another pair of horses (under an agreement to purchase or to hire them *pro tem* if meanwhile the stolen horses were recovered). I may here state that having given due notice of the theft to the Mounted Police, and having offered the above reward they were finally produced from the hiding place, (where they had been cached in expectation of a higher reward being offered), within a week of my departure and are now in possession of our District Superintendent, who requires them for the service.

Despite such delay we arrived at the Government Model Farm at Touchwood-on-Sunday, the 9th September. The land throughout the sixty-six miles traversed, is almost uniformly good, though somewhat marshy in spots, with plenty of good water and groves of poplar trees. The telegraph line follows the winter trail, which is shorter and better adapted for line repairs during the most inclement season of the year.

After leaving Touchwood Model Farm, we traversed a well wooded and watered lay of land for about ten miles (upon which several Cree Indians had erected neat log huts and had cultivated small fields of grain), until we entered upon a treeless and, in great part, alkali plain over which the telegraph line was erected in a substantial manner for a distance of about thirty-three miles until we struck the rising, and well wooded ground of Humboldt, where the newly-built telegraph line terminates and connects with the old line from Winnipeg via Fort Pelly (Livingston) to Edmonton, upon the abandoned northern route of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Humboldt telegraph office is at present in a log hut which belongs to the mail contractors who now require it for their own service, and it will be necessary to erect a small station house two or three miles south of its present position, where good water and wood are abundant.

The land about Humboldt is very well suited for farming purposes, and is of inviting appearance to settlers.

Finding that the old telegraph poles were rotten and that the line could be materially shortened by following the established western trail towards Prince Albert, I entered into a written agreement with Mr. Andrew McConnell (the contractor

for the Prince Albert branch line, who had also erected the poles across the Touchwood to Humboldt alkali plain), for the erection of an entirely new line of poles, using the old wire, etc., for a distance of fourteen miles at \$60 a mile, and also instructed him to thoroughly repair the line, putting in alternate new poles where required as far as Clark's Crossing on the South Saskatchewan River, and for which he would be allowed a fair proportionate price, upon the certificate of our District Superintendent.

We left Humboldt on the 13th September. The trail passes over a long rolling prairie destitute of wood for thirty-two miles when several heavy bluffs (the local name for groves of trees) are found upon rising ground where I have since had a small log shelter hut, 20 feet by 10 feet, constructed for the use of line repairers and their horses, and I may here state that such huts (where a little firewood and hay can be stored) are absolutely necessary for the due maintenance of the line during the winter months. They are divided into two compartments, each 10 feet by 10 feet, one with a mud chimney and log flooring for the repairers (who here meet midway between stations), the other chamber being for the shelter of the horses. The cost of these huts, including doors and one small window, is, per contract, \$125 each.

From shelter hut No. 1 the telegraph line passes over good land with occasional outlying bluffs of small poplar wood, marshes and ponds, twenty-eight miles to Clark's Crossing on the South Saskatchewan. Here, contrary to expectations, there was no ferry boat, as advertised in the newspapers, and we had to travel down the eastern bank of the river, fourteen miles to Saskatoon, the proposed future town of the Temperance Colony. At Saskatoon there were three or four framed buildings awaiting the arrival of a raft of lumber from Medicine Hat Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, to complete them. Here we found the scow ferry destined and then en route for Clark's Crossing, and having embarked the three horses and two buckboards, we laboured for three hours and were carried three miles down stream before we could effect a landing upon the opposite side of the river, and had then to drive back along its western bank to Clark's Crossing where we arrived long after dark.

The telegraph wire was carried across the river at Clark's between two rotten poles, since replaced by two heavy spruce spars for which I paid \$15, per contract, as they had first to be rafted up stream many miles and then hauled up the steep banks of the river there over 100 feet in altitude. From the

western side of Clark's Crossing the branch telegraph line to Prince Albert starts, and it will be necessary to erect a repeating station house either upon the right or left bank of the river. Meanwhile, however, an office has been opened by Mr. Caswell, a resident telegraph operator, who, with his brother, has erected a small house upon their pre-empted farm land, about two miles north of the Crossing, and upon the Prince Albert route.

When there, the poles (poplar), furnished cost free by the Prince Albert inhabitants, had lately been delivered on the ground, and have since been erected by the contractor, Mr. Andrew McConnell, who expected to complete the connection about the end of November.

I may here state that as poplar poles rot off at the surface of the ground within two or at the longest three years, and can then be reset, shortened by three or four feet, to last another season, it would be much more economical to procure spruce hacmatack or iron poles, even at a cost of two or three dollars each, rather than to make use of such fragile and unreliable timber, more especially as even poplar poles will now have to be transported for many miles (sometimes thirty) as the small bluffs or groves have been culled for those in use to such an extent that little other than bean stick can be procured within moderate hauling distances. I shall refer to this subject again at the end of this report.

Leaving Clark's Crossing, open rolling prairie destitute of wood, was traversed until we arrived near the elbow of the North Saskatchewan, at a flat-bottomed ravine known as Telegraph Coulee, distant thirty miles, where, also, a shelter hut (No. 2) has since been constructed, and about a ton of hay stacked for winter use.

Travelling westward nine miles, we next crossed Eagle Creek, a wild and precipitous ravine, with a clear stream of running water at its base; then came rolling prairie, capped with poplar bluffs, upon good though sandy land which stretched northward three or four miles to the banks of the North Saskatchewan, and then passing through several wooded, steep gulleys, we arrived at the east side of Battleford River at 6 p.m., 18th September, 302 miles distant from Qu'Appelle station.

With the exception of one heavy fall, caused by the seat of the buckboard giving way, and by which I was much cut and bruised, the journey was accomplished without accident.

Considering the rotten condition of the poles the telegraph line throughout was in tolerably effective condition, the wire

being good, but the brackets old and split and topped with insulators of the worst description. I, therefore, at once started two or three active men to renew fallen poles and otherwise repair the line as far as practicable before snowfall.

I may here state that the line was entirely unprovided with lumber wagons, harness, tools, etc., or with horses suitable for the service and necessary for ordinary repairs, and that I supplied such deficiencies, as far as possible, on the spot, leaving one of the heavy animals which I had procured at Fort Qu'Appelle, as a substitute for a pony which I subsequently drove through to Edmonton and Calgary, and which had hitherto been used by our District Superintendent, who here remained at his new headquarters.

It appears that the site originally surveyed for the town on the flats of the Battle River is subject to spring inundations of ice and water, and a new town, about two miles distant on the higher lands west, has been commenced and several framed buildings erected thereon, to which the post office and the inhabitants of the old site buildings were removing. Finding it impossible to procure even a small room for the District Superintendent's office, or shelter for the service horses, tenders were at once invited for a small building 12x24 feet, divided into two rooms, (an office and bed-room) and a log stable, both since erected at the lowest of the tenders, which varied from \$600 to \$800, in consequence of the great price demanded for small logs, viz., \$1 and \$1.25 each, spruce timber being worth \$45 per 1,000 feet.

The land about Battleford is good, though sandy, and the country is not ordinarily subject to summer frosts, although during this exceptional year, succulent plants and grain suffered more or less from such cause. Leaving Battleford early on 20th September with one man and one conveyance, we passed over twenty-four miles of good, light, sandy soil, well wooded and watered, whereon several half-breed farmers had large fields and were then reaping very satisfactory crops. Thirteen miles west we left the main trail to Fort Pitt and travelled in a south-westerly direction, following the telegraph line (here strung with No. 11 wire only) through a wooded country for ten miles, and then through a marshy valley of unlimited grass lands of the most luxurious growth, but destitute of wood for the next twenty-five miles, when we reached Blackfoot Coulée. Feathered game, comprising grey and white geese, brant, mallard, black, spoon-bill, pie, widgeon, and teal ducks; prairie grouse, snipe and

plover, were in wonderful abundance and easy of approach; but no deer, and only two prairie wolves, two foxes, a few badgers and skunks, with numerous gophers and muskrats, were seen throughout my entire journey of over 1,000 miles.

For fifteen miles east and twenty-five west of Blackfoot Coulée to Grizzly Bear, the land is rolling and hilly with very little wood but excellent soil. Grizzly Bear is a flat alkali bottom about 150 feet below the surface of the prairie and from a quarter to a half mile wide, with bluffs of poplar upon its western bank, which extend twelve or thirteen miles westward, and bring you, at thirty miles distance, to Buffalo Coulée, a similar depression, each having a small creek of slightly alkaline water running through it. West of Buffalo Creek the country is also rolling and hilly, with innumerable ponds, timber bluffs, and excellent soil, until an alkaline plain and swampy ground of forty miles in extent intervenes between it and the marshy and wooded country about Hay Lake.

The telegraph line throughout this distance is in a very rotten condition, and is carried through and over lakes, and through groves of timber, now grown up, where it was formerly cut out by the C.P.R. surveyors; the wire is also small, No. 11, weighing 199 lbs. only to the mile, and is strung upon brackets much split, and from small glass insulators of inferior quality.

Having met the line-repairer from Edmonton, then distant about 100 miles, I learned that the telegraph line west of Hay Lake passed through a swampy and woody country quite impassable for wheeled vehicles for eighteen miles until it entered upon the main trail between Edmonton and Calgary; and as I had to pass over that trail and could then inspect the telegraph line erected thereon, when on my return journey to Winnipeg, we, per his advice, followed the Beaver Lake trail which runs northwest from a small lake fifteen miles west of Buffalo Coulée. This Beaver Lake trail for twenty-nine miles passes over rolling prairies, interspersed with several large shallow lakes, with occasional patches of wood and sections of good land, the intervening sections showing considerable alkali, and thence having crossed the headwaters of Vermillion River, a small running creek, entered upon rising ground which continued for twenty miles, the land throughout being very rich and producing grass and pea vines of luxuriant growth, until we arrived at the log huts and small clearings of two or three French-Canadian half-breeds, who have settled upon the north-eastern shore of Beaver Lake. This lake is a large shallow sheet of water said to be forty miles long by from five to ten broad, and frequented by countless flocks of ducks, geese and pelicans.

Four miles from these small clearings, we crossed the Beaver River, about 100' feet wide and three feet deep, when the trail for sixteen miles bends around the northern extremity of Beaver Hill woods, in which large spruce trees first greet the eye of a westward traveller. We then passed over heavy grass-lands and through groves of large willow bushes for twenty miles, until we arrived at the settlement of Fort Saskatchewan, on September the 28th, having travelled 259 miles from Battleford within nine days, or an average of twenty-nine miles per day, the horses being thoroughly exhausted although drawing little over eight cwt., including men, buckboard, oats, etc.

On the north bank of the Saskatchewan (the old Hudson's Bay trading post, and the Mounted Police barracks, both considerably out of repair, being upon the south bank), the usual town upon paper, has been laid out, and a comfortable hostelry erected thereon, by Mr. Heimish; also a new grist and saw mill, by the Messrs. Lamoureux, French-Canadian settlers of great energy and considerable mechanical skill. A few small houses comprise this embryo city, which has "great expectations" in consequence of the best crossing for a bridge over the North Saskatchewan, upon any future railway en route to the Peace River district, being in its immediate vicinity.

When here, this small but thriving community offered to supply good spruce and hacmatack poles, an office rent free, and an operator upon the usual commission agreement, if the Government would extend the telegraph line from Edmonton, distant eighteen miles, to the settlement.

Leaving Saskatchewan during the afternoon of the 29th, we passed over eighteen miles of good trail, through fine farming lands, many acres of which were under cultivation, until we arrived at Edmonton, which is beautifully located upon the northern bank of the River Saskatchewan here, exceedingly picturesque from its lofty and well-wooded cliff banks of over 150 feet in altitude.

The following day being Sunday, was our first day of rest since leaving Winnipeg, and on Monday, October 1st, I visited the Roman Catholic Mission of St. Albert, nine miles north of Edmonton, where the Rev. Father Le Duc, (under His Lordship the resident Bishop), the priest in charge of the material, as well as the religious well-being of the settlement, very kindly explained the progress, prosperity and contentment of one of the most interesting settlements in the North-West Territories. Here the orphans of Indians who perished in the small-pox epidemic, have been carefully educated, not only in reading,

writing and arithmetic, but also instructed—the girls in household duties, and the boys, as soon as they are strong enough, at about 14 years of age, in the cultivation of the land, etc. A large general hospital, 80 by 80 feet, and three storeys in height, in which sufferers of all creeds will be generously attended to by Sisters of Mercy, was in course of erection; all the stone and brick work, carpentering, plastering, etc., being performed in the established workshops of the Mission.

Here also, the inhabitants were anxious to have telegraphic or telephonic connection via Edmonton, and they volunteered to provide good spruce or hancatack poles free of cost if the Government will construct a short nine-mile line to their settlement.

At Edmonton a large town has been plotted and the great bulk of lots actually disposed of at prices varying from \$50 to \$800 each, over a space exceeding 1,000 acres, and already over two dozen framed houses and stores have been erected thereupon.

By general consent and approval the telegraph station has lately been removed from an old and inconvenient room in the Hudson Bay Fort to a new building in a more central situation, and the operator, Mr. Taylor, is of opinion that the station will be more than self-supporting when a good and reliable line has been constructed.

As far as practicable (the station being destitute of almost every necessary appliance for maintenance until my visit when such requirements were promptly furnished) the line will be put in order for winter use by two or three active men whom I provided with a wagon, pair of horses, etc.

Leaving Edmonton on the morning of the 3rd October, we crossed the North Saskatchewan River by a wire rope ferry and mounted the high and heavily wooded banks opposite the Fort, where the last great massacre of Blackfeet Indians by their enemies the Crees, took place; and travelled alongside of the telegraph line upon the main trail towards Calgary until at about eighteen or nineteen miles distant (there are no mile posts or measured distances over the trails, a desideratum which if attended to would be an immense boon to all travellers) until it branched off at right angles eastward to Hay Lake. The poles were in a great measure rotten, the wire being small, and the insulators poor, as throughout the route eastward to within 25 miles of Battleford where No. 9 wire commences. The country through which we passed was inviting and fit for settlement, timber and water being abundant. Twenty miles further on

after crossing the Pipe-stone, we arrived at the Government Model Farm upon the Big Stone Creek, where Indians are instructed in the cultivation of the soil, cattle raising, etc. Here were several full-blooded Indians at work with commendable vigour, despite that impediment to hard work, their loose blankets, so universally worn by western tribes. Very little encouragement would, I think, induce them to adopt the Mexican blanket or poncho, which leaves the arms free to work without in any manner destroying its utility as a night covering.

Three miles south of the Farm, are the Peace Hills, then rendered exceedingly picturesque by an encampment of over 150 lodges of Indians there assembled, as at Touchwood, to receive the annual treaty bounties awarded to them by a most paternal Government, whose wise treatment of the aborigines it is a pleasure to witness.

Twenty-seven miles south of the Government Farm the Battle River, a pebbly-bottomed stream about 150 feet wide and two or three feet in depth, is crossed, and nineteen miles further on Blind-Man's River, a somewhat similar stream of 100 feet in width, well wooded with spruce, poplar, birch, etc., which continued until the Red Deer River, a swift-running stream 500 feet wide and three or four feet deep, is reached.

During this day's drive of twenty-one miles the land was of extraordinary richness, the black loam being frequently over three feet in depth as seen in the test pits dug near the trail.

At the Red Deer River Crossing, considerable acreage was under cultivation, and the crops, despite unusually early frosts had turned out well. The site upon the southern bank is a remarkably good one for either village or town, and the place will without doubt become an important centre of settlement upon the Calgary to Edmonton and Peace River route.

For twenty-five miles south of Red Deer River Crossing to "Lone Pine," the land continues good with abundance of timber within moderate distance of the trail, after which you enter upon a perfectly open, treeless prairie, with little or no water until the Willow Creek Coulée, sixteen miles south of the Lone Pine, is reached, and here even small growth poplar is scarce. Mr. Scarlett, a settler from British Columbia, has, however, erected a way-station house at the Creek for the accommodation of travellers.

Fifteen miles southerly, McPherson's Creek, of running water but no wood, is reached, and 29 miles additional of treeless, open, rolling and hilly prairie brings you to Calgary,

distant about 185 miles from Edmonton, and certainly one of the most picturesquely beautiful places throughout the thousand miles over which I had driven my now thoroughly exhausted team of lean horses, despite their being carefully attended to, and regularly fed upon oats (two days only excepted) during the entire journey.

I may here state that at Calgarry I was fortunate enough to make an exceedingly satisfactory sale of my entire outfit, which had cost about \$490, for the sum of \$367.50, so that my actual transport materials throughout the foregoing long journey cost less than \$125. I was also thus enabled to repurchase a necessary and thoroughly efficient outfit for our District Superintendent's service upon the line between Qu'Appelle, Prince Albert and Battleford, at a much less cost than if I had paid freight upon the horses and much worn material back to Qu'Appelle, plus the hire of the mare taken from Fort Qu'Appelle, and the then value of an exhausted and lean pony which was estimated at \$40 only by the Calgarry purchaser, of the outfit as a whole.

From Calgarry I proceeded per Canadian Pacific Railway via Medicine Hat, Regina and Brandon, to Winnipeg, and thence via Chicago to Ottawa, where I arrived October 29th, 1883.

In conclusion of this report I have now to add the following observations and recommendations:

1. That the telegraph line between Qu'Appelle Station and Humboldt, 151 miles, and between Clark's Crossing and Prince Albert, 95 miles, being newly built, although of poplar poles, is in good order; the wire, No. 8, weighing 376 lbs. per statute mile, and the brackets and insulators being of good quality.
2. That the line between Humboldt and Clark's Crossing, 60 miles, has been rebuilt for 14 miles, and repaired for 46 miles with alternate new poles, the wire being No. 9, weighing 303 lbs. to the mile, but the brackets being old, and the insulators of small and poor description.
3. That the line from Clark's Crossing to Battleford, 155 miles, is in a bad condition, the poles (poplar) being rotten; the wire, No. 9, good, but the insulators and brackets poor. It has, however, been placed in as good order as practicable by three repairers, for winter service.
4. That from Battleford to Edmonton, 302 miles, the line is upon its last legs, the poles being rotten, the wire, beyond

twenty-five miles west of Battleford being No. 11, weighing 199 lbs. to the mile and much too weak for service, many of the brackets split, and the insulators of the poorest description.

5. That throughout the entire line there was either a marked deficiency or total absence of all necessary material for the repair and maintenance of the line; the office instruments being also ineffective.

6. That the telegraph line is rarely near the travelled trail, as it was originally erected, and has since been maintained upon the abandoned surveyed route of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and in consequence passes through and over lakes, muskegs, and bluffs of timber which have since grown up and now bear upon the wires. The inconvenience and greatly increased difficulty of repairing such a line can hardly be over-estimated, for even a poor trail is luxury in comparison with a drive over rough ground perforated with innumerable badger and gopher holes.

7. That the total revenue of the line, when transferred to the Department of Public Works, did not exceed \$50 per month, versus an expenditure of over \$600 per month.

8. That it was the unanimous opinion of settlers throughout the North-West that in no other manner could the Dominion Government, at such small comparative cost, so conduce to the welfare of the people, and settlement of the land, as by the establishment of an effective system of telegraphy, connecting outlying localities with the capital of Manitoba and Eastern Canada.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That in all future telegraph lines erected by Government in the North-West No. 6 galvanized iron wire, weighing 570 pounds per statute mile, and equal to a breaking strain of 1,850 lbs., be used, together with first-class insulators and good screw, oak or iron brackets or pins.

2. That wherever practicable hacmatack or spruce poles be obtained, although at a cost of not exceeding \$2 each delivered on the ground, rather than use poplar, which eventually costs much more during the life-time of the better wood. And that light iron or steel poles, at a cost of not exceeding \$3 each delivered on the ground, be used throughout prairie sections which are distant from spruce or hacmatack groves of timber.

3. That telegraph stations be established at not over 100 miles apart, and that shelter huts for repairers' use be erected within 33 miles of each station, or each other.

4. That the lines between Qu'Appelle Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, via Touchwood, Humboldt and Clark's Crossing to Battleford, and between Clark's Crossing and Prince Albert, be maintained in effective working order, the poles being gradually replaced by a better class of timber or iron, as required.

5. That the 24 or 25 miles of No. 9 wire, west of Battleford be taken down, and that the line thence to Edmonton, which passes through an almost entirely uninhabited country, one not likely to be settled or traversed by a branch railway for many years, and far south of the North Saskatchewan route of travel via Fort Pitt, be abandoned *in toto*.

6. That the offer of the inhabitants of Saskatchewan and of St. Albert to provide spruce and hancmatack poles, be accepted, and that a line be erected to those settlements, 18 miles and 9 miles, respectively, from Edmonton.

7. That an entirely new line, furnished with hancmatack and spruce poles, which contractors offer to deliver along the trail for \$1.40 each, be erected between Edmonton and Calgarry, the distance being 180 to 185 miles.

8. That prior to the erection of such telegraph line, a new main trail, probably approximate to the present one though shorter, be surveyed out between Edmonton and the most convenient station for freighters, at or near Calgarry.

Finally I may add that should the foregoing recommendations meet with the approval of the Government, I am of opinion that, when established, such lines would not only be self-supporting, but also at a comparatively small cost, tend very much to the prosperity of the inhabitants, and also to the more rapid settlement of the North-West; nor should it be forgotten that the Calgarry to Edmonton line would be a section of its future expansion to the Peace River district.

I also take the liberty of suggesting that a very small expenditure of money upon the survey and improvements of the main trails between important points of distribution, would most materially lessen the cost of freight conveyance throughout the North-West, and, by facilitating the speed of mail delivery and passenger travel, greatly assist the immediate settlement of the country through which they run.

Probably in no country in the world could so much be effected in road making at a trifling cost, by simply graveling (from knolls in the vicinity) the bottoms of mud creeks or sloughs, where there is no timber available for bridging, and by straightening tortuous trails which were originally made by buffaloes and wandering Indians or freighters, and since travelled by persons only too glad to follow any land mark rather than run the risk of coming across bad spots, or losing themselves in an endeavor to improve the old and unnecessarily circuitous routes.

I may here state that the telegraph line erected by the Government between Winnipeg and Port Arthur, 436 miles, having been assumed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company as a portion of the necessary equipment of the permanent way transferred to them, I did not inspect or report upon its condition during my late visit to the North-West Provinces.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

F. N. GISBORNE,

*Superintendent of Telegraph and Signal Service.*

F. H. ENNIS, Esq.,

Secretary,

Department of Public Works.

# Synopsis of the Work of Mr. Lindeburgh in the Service of the Government

*Contributed by his daughter, Mrs. Dr. MacKay, Tisdale.*

1874—John W. Sifton had the contract to build a Government Telegraph line from Cross Lake (18 miles west of Selkirk, Man.) to Fort Pelly, Sask.

1880—Mr. Lindeburgh was placed at Humboldt as telegraph agent there, and he also had charge of the Meteorological Observation Station there. Geo. Weldon, his wife, little daughter and his wife's sister, Miss Margaret Liggett, made their home at "Old Humboldt."

1882—A new telegraph line from South Qu'Appelle was built, passing through Fort Qu'Appelle, Touchwood Hills, across the Salt Plain to Humboldt; here it joined the original line built, in 1874, from Selkirk. Mr. Lindeburgh had charge of this construction.

1883—Humboldt Station was closed. Mr. Weldon and his family left, he becoming agent for the C.P.R. at Grenfell. Mr. Lindeburgh was sent to Touchwood Hills to open up a Government Telegraph Station there. He took land, built his own home and office, and opened up what is known as the Kutawa Telegraph Office, 70 miles from Qu'Appelle, the nearest railway station, and about 70 miles from Humboldt. He was line repairer, as well, from Fort Qu'Appelle to Humboldt.

1884—He married Miss Margaret Liggett in April of 1884, who was then living at Grenfell with the Weldons.

1885—The Indian Rebellion. Although there was no open fighting at Kutawa, the Indians were very hostile. A close watch had to be kept by the operator, at the telegraph office. He was by the instrument day and night, snatching bits of sleep by his desk, ever ready for the "sounder" to receive the messages. The wire was cut west of Kutawa. Telegrams containing orders, etc., were received over the wire from Qu'Appelle and Fort Qu'Appelle, and despatch riders were sent out from the Kutawa office with them to the troops west.

Up to 1922 Mr. Lindeburgh was operator and line repairer at Kutawa.

Mrs. Lindeburgh became a very proficient operator and took charge of the office messages while Mr. Lindeburgh was out doing his repair work.

The repair work was very strenuous, particularly in the winter months when there was no beaten road or trail to follow along the line. There was 30 miles of a stretch on the east "beat" without sign of habitation, and many miles more in the west "beat." The west beat took him to "Old" Humboldt, where he met the repairer from Prince Albert, and on reaching there there was only the old house, the former home of Mr. and Mrs. Weldon, now empty. Many years later Mr. Robert McDonald brother of the Superintendent, was placed in charge of an office at Humboldt and took part of Mr. Lindeburgh's west beat for repair, as well as some miles west of Humboldt.

The west beat also had many other privations, these being the lack of food for horse and fuel for fires. The Salt Plain, over which this line passed, was practically destitute of grass or tree.

All trips in winter were made with a homemade "flat sleigh," to ride over the snow. This sleigh carried the bannock, tea and bacon, also blankets and some sacks of oats; also bandages for the horses' legs were provided, to be used when the snow was so crusted it would cut the horses' legs.

The repairer himself using snowshoes, occasionally in the very severe weather a second man (Johnny Brass) was taken. Both these men walked, and sometimes ahead of the horse to break the trail.

In summer the mosquitoes were a terrible plague. On the Salt Plain was no water fit for drink. The Saline Creek had to be forded in the springtime, this being a very treacherous task, the creek being so high with water that often the horse swam and the provisions and "instrument" had to be hoisted to the seat of the buckboard.

On all trips Mr. Lindeburgh carried his "instrument," with which he could "cut-in" on the wire. At regular distances he had "testing blocks" to which he attached this telegraph instrument and so reported his progress and location to Kutawa or the Superintendent at Qu'Appelle.

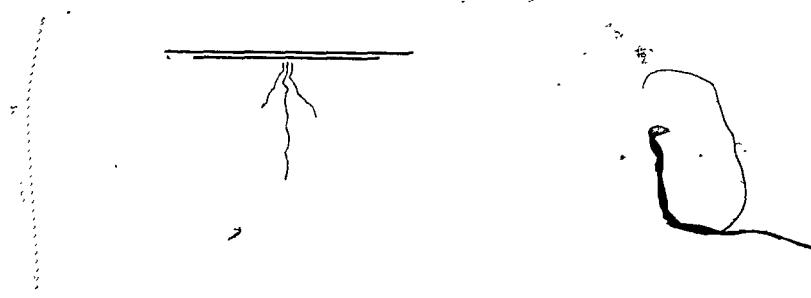
During later years the country became more settled, until at last the Grand Trunk Pacific Transcontinental was built, pass-

ing about 5 miles from the Kutawa Telegraph Office. There was a very busy two years at this office doing all the business in the way of telegrams on the railway construction camps.

Following the building of the stations on the G.T.P. the business dwindled away from the government offices along the old line, and in 1922 the office at Kutawa was closed, the old line abandoned and dismantled in 1923, and Mr. Lindeburgh, after a continuous service of nearly 50 years, was given superannuation.

The last bit of construction work Mr. Lindeburgh did for the Government was when he was in charge of the building of a telephone line from File Hills Agency to Fort Qu'Appelle.

Mr. Lindeburgh still lives at the old home at Kutawa and has reached the ripe old age of 85 years.



# The Canadian North-West Historical Society Projected Publications

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This Society is conducting a careful research in various subjects relating to the earliest history of the Prairie Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in order to secure the story of the actual eye-witnesses. These stories are being published in such publications as relate to an event. Interested pioneers and prominent historians are searching and writing in the attempt to save the Source History and to present it in an interesting way to the citizen of the great historic plain.

Mackay of the Canadian Northwest.

Canon Matheson—Saskatchewan's First Graduate.

Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan.—Robt. Jefferson.

Early Days in the Police Force.—Chas. Parker.

Early Surveys and Other Reminiscences.—R. C. Laurie.

The Prairiewomen.

The Pioneering of Senator Prince.

Saskatchewan's Leaders.

The Free Traders.

The Hudson's Bay Company.

The North-West Company.

Early Navigation on the Saskatchewan.

Scouting.

On the Red River Trails.

With Her Majesty's Mails.

Fort Chipewyan.

Fort Carlton.

Cumberland House.

Fort Pitt.

The Era of Exploration.

The French in the North-West.

The Cree Indian.

Indian Legends.

Life on a Reserve.

Indian Education.

The Indian Chiefs of the Treaty Days.

Our Red River Pioneers.

The Bresaylor Settlement.

Buffalo Hunting.

The Fur Trade.

Ranching.

When Battleford was the Capital.

Our Political History.

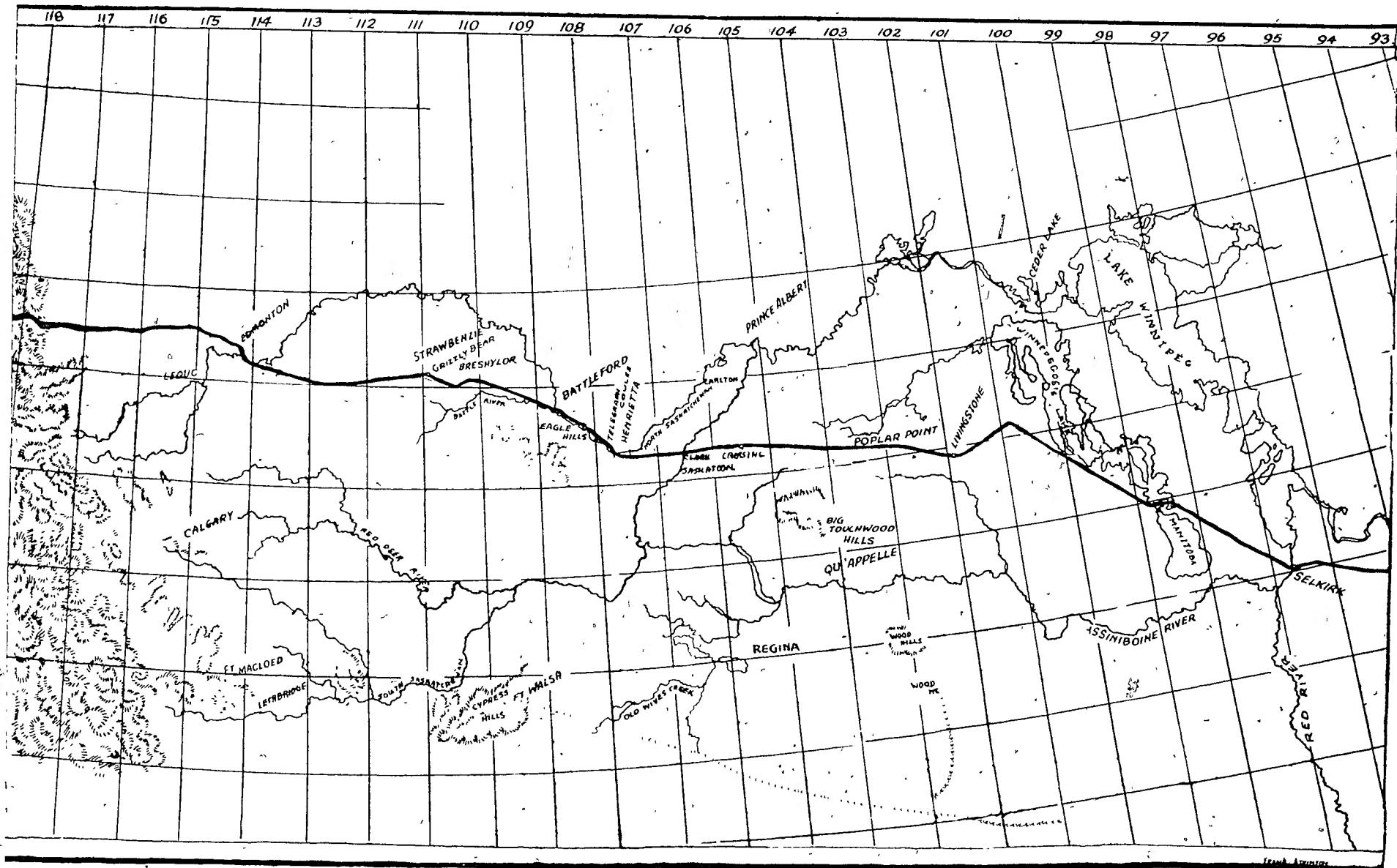
Law and Order.

Land Settlement and Colonization.

The Cree Rebellion.

The Causes of the Rebellion of 1885.

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Frog Lake and Fort Pitt.  
With General Strange at Frenchman's Butte.  
The Wanderings of Big Bear's Son.  
The Police Share in the Rebellion.  
The Results of the 1885 Rebellion.  
Louis Riel and His Colleagues.  
The Saskatchewan Herald's Story of 1885.  
The Historic Spots of Saskatchewan.  
Western Rhymes.  
The Old-Timers' Register.  
The Red River Jig.  
In Sunshine and Storm.  
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Societies.  
The Telegraph.  
Early Railway Development.  
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Early Electioneering.  
Some North-West Problems.  
Index of the Archives of Battleford.  
Reminiscences of Louis Cochin, O.M.I.  
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The Stoneyes.  
Fort Edmonton.  
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The Police Posts.  
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Original Location of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Telegraph

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## THE OLD TIMER'S CHANT

A health to the land, my masters,  
And a toast to the rolling sea,  
The rolling, billowing wheat lands  
Tossing their plumes on the lea:

A toast,  
And break your glass, lads,  
A toast to the long-trail men  
Who sailed the prairie schooners,  
Loaded and sailed again.

And a tear for the wives, old timer,  
The wives of the pioneer  
Who longed for the fireside comforts  
That few of them got while here:

A tear,  
Our wives, old timers,  
With small hard-worked brown hands  
That never ceased from toiling  
For the rolling prairie lands.

A cheer for our sons, God bless them,  
And the daughters of prairie breed,  
Strong mothers of a nation  
Whose seed shall be our seed:

A cheer,  
The Federation,  
East, West and North, be true!  
Our hearths, the King and Canada,  
The old land and the new.

—Janet Munro.